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FACT AND FAITH



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FACT AND FAITH

BY

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FOR EXAMINATION

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*I questioned the earth and heaven ;
I inquired of the day and night ;
I climbed to the heights of knowledge ;
I traversed the fields of light ;
And I heard the world's loud voices,
Like the surge of a troubled sea ;
For the heart of man is restless,
Till it rests, O Lord, in Thee.*

*I go on my way victorious ;
I am done with the pain and strife ;
I drink of the mighty river
That flows from the wells of life ;
And I hear the silent voices,
Like the swell of a sleeping sea ;
And my heart, O Lord, rejoices—
It has found its rest in Thee.*

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I

CHRIST AND THE GOSPELS

“DOUBTLESS God might have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.” These words, ascribed to an English prelate by the author of the “Compleat Angler,” point the contrast between a theology that rests upon experience and religious speculation which the evidence of facts does not necessarily justify. For a sufficiently wide induction of instances substantiates, as many think, the statement that God’s earth knows no better berry than the strawberry. That, if He had seen fit to do so, God might have improved upon the strawberry is a statement wholly precarious, resting on the unproved assumption of divine omnipotence. The suggestion of the Sunday-school teacher that St. Peter was enabled to kneel on what he supposed to

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have been the slanting roof of the tanner's house at Joppa because with God all things are possible strikes the mind as unsatisfactory, not merely because it neglects the possibility of a solution which, when known, deprives the occurrence of any remarkable peculiarities, but because all explanations of phenomena that rest upon what is after all a negative view of the divine activity are a confession of ignorance and no more.

When we apply the term "infinite" to the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, we are dealing with a series of ideas to which we can give no concrete reality. There is no objection to such language, provided we clearly recognise that we mean no more than transcendent, and allow ourselves to be guided in practical matters by the positive revelations of the God who hides Himself rather than by what may be supposed to follow from an absence of limitations, which at best we infer. In goodness there is something so essentially absolute that it is difficult to imagine what the quality of infinity as applied to it may mean. But when infinite power is ascribed to the loving wisdom of the Most High, we may be permitted to remind ourselves that

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Aristotle quotes with approval the poet Agathon as saying—

Μόνον γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ θεὸς στερίσκεται
ἀγένητα ποιεῖν ἄσσ' ἂν ἦ πεπραγμένα.¹

We should also bear in mind that the Latin word *omnipotens*, which in the Apostles' Creed we apply to the Father, is but the translation of *ποντοκράτωρ*, which to the Greek mind meant very much what the eighteenth century expressed by the Supreme Governor of the Universe; and that religion from the days of Abraham has been concerned not with a Great Original, in the sense of a metaphysical principle of unity, but with a Fatherly Personality, in the shadow of whose wings His children may place their trust.

This is a truth upon which in the present day we have much reason to insist. When, for example, Mr. Blatchford in his plea for the Bottom Dog asserts that religious people believe in a great first cause, we reply that this idea has a primary importance for philosophy rather than for religion. It is no doubt true that, as the religious thinkers of Israel

¹ Nic. Eth. vi. 2, "This is the one thing which even God has no power to do—to make the thing done as though it had never been."

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advanced to higher and more spiritual views of the God of Jacob, they lifted their eyes to the spacious firmament when they beheld the stars in their courses—

“ For ever singing, as they shine,
The Hand that made us is divine.”

But the side from which God is approached is ever that of His personal relations with men as He manifests Himself in conscience and through nature to those who are the objects of His paternal thought and care. We are not, for example, in the interests of a philosophic monism so to insist upon God's universal responsibility as that a man, when he is tempted, shall say it is of God that I am tempted. While the moral necessity of the final triumph of good over evil is not only abundantly recognised in Scripture, but becomes the very basis upon which Redemption proceeds, it is the imprisonment of the Evil One, not his annihilation, far less his reabsorption, which is the last word of the Bible. If then evil remains, as indeed it does, an unresolved mystery, it cannot be said that the Being of God Himself, which He cannot deny, is the only limitation of omnipotence, that from a human standpoint remains as a condi-

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tion of the divine activity. Nor does the argument of design, as restated, for example, in the light of modern biological thought by the late Aubrey Moore or Mr. Vernon Storr, necessarily involve a complete adjustment between the purposes of the Supreme Mind and their realisation in the phenomenal world.

Now of course I am not concerned to minimise our conception of the power of God. The trust in a Heavenly Father, who numbers the hairs of our head and without whom not a sparrow falls, is bound to carry the mind onward to that ultimate self-existent unity which philosophy postulates, outside which there exists not one thing. Nor yet am I concerned to deny that the human intellect refuses to rest in any explanation of the universe which does not end in this great object of faith. But what I do wish to guard against is that intellectual habit which refuses to "return to the earth our habitation," and is not careful to "join abstract reasoning" about Deity "with the observation of facts."¹ It is these which after all are what Aristotle calls the *πρότερον ἡμῖν*, the end from which we start. It is in the things which are made that

¹ Butler's Analogy, Introd.

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God, as St. Paul has it, makes known to men His eternal power and divinity.¹ And in spite of all that is said in some quarters about the want of touch between Bishop Butler's philosophy and modern conceptions of the universe, I am increasingly convinced that a renewed study of Butler is precisely what is most wanted in the present day. It is not to be expected that this great thinker should have anticipated the theory of evolution, though, in what he says about correspondence between nature and condition as resulting in life and happiness, we are reminded of the jargon about adaptation and environment with which after Darwin we have been made familiar. But he is conspicuous for his insistence upon the inductive method in the study of religion. And it is this which removes Butler from the category of apologists concerned with contemporary objections to Christian faith, and gives him a place among the great writers who are not of an age but for all time. Not only does he exemplify this method in his own study of human nature in the Rolls sermons, which in their recognition of the solidarity of the race are almost a charter of Christian Socialists, but again and again in the Analogy

¹ Rom. i. 20.

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he recalls the mind from abstract speculation to concrete facts. "A mere matter of fact, a thing of experience," is a form of expression in which he delights. "General consent" or "the common sense of mankind," representing as it does a sum of experience, is an authority to which he loves to appeal. But there are two passages to which attention may be specially directed as having a very particular bearing upon the subject with which we are about to deal, the importance of approaching Christ from the side of the facts.

The first is in the Introduction to the Analogy, and runs as follows:—

"Forming our notions of the constitution and government of the world upon reasoning, without foundation for the principles which we assume, whether from the attributes of God, or anything else, is building a world upon hypothesis, like Des Cartes. Forming our notions upon reasoning from principles which are certain, but applied to cases to which we have no ground to apply them . . . is an error much akin to the former."

Against such untrustworthy speculations Butler asserts the necessity of joining abstract reasonings with the observation of

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facts. The other passage will be found in the fifth chapter of the first part. It is a warning against that futile habit of mind which is constantly tending to go behind, if that were possible, the facts of life and experience, instead of endeavouring to build up a theory of the universe on the foundation of these facts.

“It cannot but be acknowledged plain folly and presumption to pretend to give an account of the whole reasons of this matter; the whole reasons of our being allotted a condition out of which so much wickedness and misery, so circumstanced, would in fact arise.”

It will be observed that both these tendencies, against which Butler protests, equally spring from a habit of mind which in its impatience to arrive at an ultimate and entirely consistent unity will first outrun the facts and then double upon them with consequences that may sometimes be disastrous.

And there is no department of theology in which we are more ready to follow the high *priori* road than that which relates to the Person of Christ. We are tempted to forget that the fact of Christ must always be something wider than the highest development

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of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Yet surely it is true, however unreservedly we may be led to acknowledge the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit who is to lead us into all the truth, that what is sacred, what is divine, what remains constant is that life and death, that truth embodied in a tale, of which all Christologies are at best only an approximate representation. Even if I were, what so far as I know I am not, a Christian Platonist, I should have great hesitation in assenting to the doubt expressed by Dr. Inge,¹ whether any one can be an orthodox theologian without being a Platonist. Without in any degree assenting to the attempt made by the Ritschlians to find a *tertium quid* between a purely humanistic view of Jesus of Nazareth and the formulas in which traditional Christianity has enshrined its belief that Christ is God, I should nevertheless feel that they were right in the contention that such forms as the Logos Christology or the two Natures in one Person of the Nicene doctrine, belong to the realm of representation rather than that of reality. It may be quite true, and the unsatisfactory efforts of our German contemporaries to apply the theory of value

¹ Personal Idealism and Mysticism, p. 67.

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judgments to the interpretation of the Gospel would seem to prove that for the present at any rate it is true, that nothing can take the place of existing terminology, in spite of its obvious defects, if we are to be left in possession of a Lord whom we can worship as our risen Redeemer. But Mr. Illingworth is on perfectly sure ground when from the undoubted principle that "man lives first, and thinks afterwards" he advances to the further statement that "Christian theology arose, like all other human thought, in meditation upon a fact of experience."¹ This is the point which must be emphasised. Christology is human thought. The divine datum is the fact of Christ, who is marked off as Son of God, with power through the Resurrection. If it be objected that experience is always individual, and that something is required to guarantee objective reality, the reply must be that the witness of the Church corrects the personal equation. But in any case, I am not careful to make answer in this matter, for at the risk of appearing hopelessly unphilosophic I am prepared to affirm that a fact is a fact.

Illustrations are always imperfect. But, perhaps, we may represent our doctrines of

¹ Personality Human and Divine. Lecture I.

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the Person of Christ as standing to the manifested Christ Himself in the relation of the musical notation to the chord, the chemical equation to the phenomenon which it represents. Or, it may be, we shall get a closer analogy if we take the modern doctrine of evolution, which is the attempt to reproduce in thought the actual processes which have been developing themselves in nature and history. All is well so long as it is recognised that there is not a perfect adjustment between the facts to which the theory is applied, and the account of these facts which the theory professes to give. There is always something more in the phenomena than any scientific explanation can adequately represent. Further progress is impossible, so soon as the doctrine of Darwin or any other natural philosopher becomes a mould into which the facts must be cramped. Weismann must be allowed to modify Darwin, if it can be shown that his theory more accurately represents reality. Precisely the same relation, as it would seem, is established between Christ and the Gospel on the one hand, and Christian theology on the other. We must turn even from a triumphant recitation of the clauses of the Nicene Faith to the Redeemer who bought us with the thank-

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ful acknowledgment that "Thou, O Lord, art more than they." It is fatally easy to elevate either the theologoumena, in which faith rationally expresses itself, or the philosophy, which inevitably adheres to terminology, into the real object of faith, and to end by worshipping the creature instead of the Creator. We become the slaves of a theory. We have departed from the narrow way of a reverent agnosticism, which is nothing if not always inductive.

Take first of all the philosophy. It ought to be sufficiently evident that the point of the Homousion is to be sought in the oneness of the Father and the Son. The term *Ousia* is employed simply to express the fact that it is a real and not merely a moral unity or agreement. Whether the word itself comes from the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle or Martin Tupper is of no consequence. I entirely refuse to believe that any sort of philosophy is thereby introduced into the doctrine of the Incarnation. So also with the Logos, which is declared to be a prominent feature, not only in the teaching of St. John, but in the theology of St. Paul. It cannot be believed that we are in any way committed to a Platonic doctrine of the Divine Reason or

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Self-expression, and that it is, to say the least of it, a matter of supreme difficulty for an orthodox theologian to dissent from the view of the universe characteristic of the Platonists. Without denying for a moment the mystical tendency of St. John's own mind or a certain natural affinity between his thought and the forms of contemporary schools, we may yet insist upon the emphasis which he lays upon inductive method by resting his case upon "that which we have seen and heard." What the Fourth Gospel appears to make prominent is, not so much that in the beginning was the Word, as that those who find this mode of thought most congenial to their habit of mind should bring themselves into line with the Christian facts by acknowledging that the Word became Flesh. This statement requires guarding. The term *Logos* may well have been designed in the eternal order of things to give expression to what the spiritual insight of St. John was able to detect in the fact of Christ. It is not, however, proposed to abandon the language which has been deliberately adopted by an Apostle as a medium for declaring the divinity of Christ. But it is contended that the theologian is not, any more than the man of science, necessarily a

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philosopher. "I am," said Rabbi Duncan, "a philosophical sceptic, who have taken refuge in theology." And it was said of his illustrious successor in the chair of Hebrew at the New College in Edinburgh—Dr. A. B. Davidson—that "his distrust of philosophy and its methods lasted to the end, and was often sarcastically expressed."¹ To say with the Christian mystic² that, if you happen to be partial to the modern system known as Pragmatism, you must hold that each human personality dwells in a hard shell, impervious to external influence, and therefore cannot with any show of reason exclaim with St. Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ"; is to make an arrogant assumption which in the name of a free and independent theology we must firmly decline. Philosophy may be a very excellent clearing-house for all the sciences, but it must not be allowed to dominate any one, least of all the divine science. The frogs and mice, the Platonists and Pragmatists, may carry on their Homeric warfare, and welcome; but in the name of all that is practical let Christian doctrine be kept clear of the

¹ See Mr. Taylor Innes' Introduction to *The Called of God*, p. 15.

² Inge, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, pp. 94 ff.

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issue. There will, no doubt, always be the tendency for Christianity to express itself in terms of the dominant thought of each succeeding age. It will also remain true that the light in which each individual sees light must be that of his own rational understanding. But the theory must never govern the facts. We must never so put our own philosophy at the back of our religion that it dominates the situation, requiring that at all costs the facts shall conform themselves to its outlines. It is as much an endeavour to put the new wine in old skins as was the first great attempt to cramp the Faith within those limits of which St. Paul declared, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." It is equally paradoxical and equally true to assert, that if ye become Christian Platonists your faith is vain. From all such speculative altitudes let us, in the spirit of Butler, return to the earth our habitation.

Now let us turn to the snares which are constantly being laid for us by the terminology which the Church has used to express the mystery of our Saviour's Person. And first we must remind ourselves that the starting-point of the theology of the Incarnation is the vacant tomb, "According to

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my Gospel," says St. Paul, "Jesus Christ is declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection."¹ All subsequent Christology is built upon this foundation. The problem, as we are all aware, is how we are to express the belief of Christ's divinity, involved in the homage paid to Him who is risen and ascended, without impairing the reality of that human life to which the evangelists bear witness. This was solved in the first four centuries by the postulate, which subsequent ages, without readjustment to a more accurate psychology have been contented to repeat, of two Natures in one Person. There is nothing here of which to complain, provided that it be recognised that the two natures exist in our Christology and not in the concrete reality of our Lord's Personality, as It manifests itself to us in the events of the Gospel. What is a nature apart from a personality? Has it any real existence? We have outgrown that clumsy psychology which used to speak of faculties as actual mental and spiritual furniture, and which failed to take account of the concrete personalities of men as indivisible unities, from which faculties or capacities were

¹ Rom. i. 4.

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nothing but abstractions. Godhead and manhood in Christ are abstractions, conceptions by the aid of which we endeavour to convey the twofold impression of the Personality of Jesus Christ, which leads us to affirm that He was in all points tempted as we are, while yet we exclaim with reverent worship, "My Lord and my God!"

Let me repeat that it is the indivisible Person of Christ which is the object of experience, not the two natures, which have only a representative value as expressing what we believe that the facts of His manifestation show Him to be. In effect, however, much of the traditional language of theology so actualises the natures as inevitably to convey the impression that Christ is in reality two personalities, on the analogy of Stevenson's well-known romance of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. A good illustration of what is here meant may be taken from a passage in the Tome of St. Leo, in which he endeavours to describe what is known as the *communicatio idiomatum*, or mutual interchange of attributes between the Godhead and the manhood in Christ:—

"As it belongs not to the same nature to weep with pity for a dead friend, and with a

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command to raise the same restored to life, on the removal of the stone which covered the grave wherein he had lain four days ; or to hang upon the cross, and, changing light into darkness, to make all the elements tremble ; or to be pierced with nails, and to open the gates of Paradise to the believing malefactor ; so it does not belong to the same nature to say, 'I and my Father are one,' and to say, 'The Father is greater than I.'"

There is at once introduced into the study of our Lord's earthly life something extraordinarily mechanical when it thus becomes possible to dissect His activity with the precision that modern criticism applies to the book of Genesis, and to assign each word or deed to one or other of two opposite natures, which appear almost like Jacob and Esau struggling together in the womb. Leo was of course an infallible pope, and his interpretations ought not, perhaps, to be treated as normal. But this method of analysis has, in fact, been prevalent, not only depriving the Gospel narrative of actuality, but arguing a knowledge of the limitations of manhood and Godhead, about which we had better be content to remain agnostic, till, as Tennyson has it, we can offer a complete

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account of the "flower in the crannied wall." Are we justified, for example, in excluding any part of the personality of our Lord from the words "Jesus wept," ascribing His tears to the humanity alone? Again—to consider the last of the passages to which Leo himself refers, "The Father is greater than I"—are we, according to the prevailing Western interpretation, to take the words of the human nature? Or with the majority of Greek theologians, shall we ascribe them to the derived Deity of the Second Person as dependent on the unoriginate First? Or is there not a third and simpler course, to decline the dilemma altogether? Surely there is something singularly unreal in the Personality with which we invest our blessed Lord, if we attribute to His utterances what cannot well be distinguished from mental reservations, and picture Him as saying, "Of course I am now speaking in my humanity." Nor is the case greatly mended—on the contrary, new difficulties are raised—if we postulate unconsciousness on His part. I must confess to considerable hesitation in affirming, as the second interpretation seems to demand, that Jesus Christ anticipated the nice, though necessary, distinctions of theology in His conver-

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sations with the disciples. In approaching this and similar sayings of our Lord I prefer to do so in a historical spirit. I cannot but feel that what the illustrious Scottish scholar, of whom I have already spoken, said of the Old Testament, is true also of the manifestation of Christ in the New. "There has been too much tendency"—these are Dr. Davidson's words—"to dis sever revelation from any relation to the human mind in its origin, and to the men of its immediate times in its application. We have been too apt to look at it as coming from heaven like a meteoric stone, amazing to the spectators, but to be analysed and used only by a subsequent era." ¹

Jesus Christ is not a meteoric stone. The beginning of His Gospel must be sought in the place where John was baptising. The Resurrection is the crowning fact, the culminating point, in the evolution of that Gospel. Then, and not till then, is He fully and finally marked off as the Son of God. Of course this mighty fact, when it occurred, opened the minds of the disciples to understand many things in the teaching of their Master which had been dark to them before.

¹ The Called of God, p. 35.

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But it did not invalidate any of the facts of their previous experience by attaching sophistical meanings to plain statements, or suggesting an unnatural psychology of the most real personality into relation with which they had ever been brought. It is not for us to mount to the pinnacle of God's temple and then kick away the only ladder by which we have been able to reach that eminence, and through which alone we maintain our communication with the ground.

Sound interpretations of the prophets of the Old Testament must always begin by reconstructing the situation in which the prophecy was first spoken. The words of Isaiah or Jeremiah invariably bear an intelligible relation to the history of the times. We must apply the same canons to our Lord's life and teaching prior to the Resurrection. We must hold no brief for any particular interpretation. We are confronted with a real, living Personality. What are its actual manifestations? As a typical instance take the conversation with the sons of Zebedee, when they asked for seats on the right and left of their Master in the kingdom of Messiah. Jesus tells them that the concession which they ask is not His to give.

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Nothing whatever is to be gained by raising the question whether He here speaks as man or as God. On the contrary, the irrelevance of the inquiry is at once revealed by the unreality which it gives to one of the most living incidents in the Gospels. But for the theological question which will persist in looming on the horizon, Christ's answer to the request of the two brothers may be interpreted without any unusual power of insight. "The battle is yet to fight upon which will depend the great issue whether or not I am to win a kingdom. There is the baptism to receive, the cup to drink. If I overcome, it will be through pain, and suffering, and hard conflict. Will you trust me as a leader? Then indeed you shall fight at my side; you shall share the hardships of the great campaign. But the reward of victory—that is still on the knees of God. He alone knows who will answer to their names when the roll is called." Does such an exegesis seem incompatible with the Deity of Christ? Only if we persist in telling our Lord God what the Incarnation of His Son must necessarily involve. But what do we know of such an Incarnation, or of its possibility, prior to the facts whereon alone our conviction rests?

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Would St. John, as he gazed into the empty tomb on Easter morning, doubt that Jesus was indeed the Resurrection and the Life, because his Master had declared plainly to him beforehand that the issue of His life and work was, like all issues of which mankind have any experience, uncertain, till He had Himself victoriously achieved the vanquishment of death? What Christ had produced in the minds of His disciples was a moral trust in His Personality, not a dead assurance of His irresistible Godhead. If the New Testament has any meaning, the joy set before Him was a prize, not a prediction.

Our acknowledgment of the Divinity of Christ depends on an induction. It is a synthetic not an analytic judgment. It rests on experience. It is an interpretation of facts. We cannot turn round upon any of the facts of the life of Jesus with the conclusion at which we have arrived and colour those facts with the inferences which we imagine must necessarily follow from this conclusion. For we can form no verifiable hypothesis of the form which an Incarnation must necessarily take. Just as we must be content to remain pure agnostics on the question whether God could have improved upon the

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strawberry, so must we take the Incarnation as we find it and interpret the facts as they are. There are no principles which enable us to adjust that paradox of experience which lies at the root of the Christian life, St. Paul's "I, yet not I." So with the great paradox of Christology, "God yet man, man yet God." We must therefore be quite fearless in our fidelity to facts, in our application of the inductive method to the study of the Gospels.

In the next chapter we shall have to deal with a very obvious department of inquiry into the Personality of our Lord, His relation to temptation and sin. Here it will be enough to suggest one or two other directions in which our minds are likely to be beset by preliminary prejudices.

Take, for example, the controversy, which has been revived in recent years, concerning the virginal conception of our Saviour. It is remarkable to notice how able writers on either side start from what is really an *a priori* consideration. On the one hand we have those who fail to see the value of this article of the creed for theology, and more especially for religion. Of these Sir Oliver Lodge may be taken as a type. The peculiar

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value of this writer's essays in religious philosophy lies in their tentative character. There is scarcely anything which he has put forward in the *Hibbert Journal* that we could wish unwritten, because we have here the unprofessional mind, testing by its own hypotheses the conclusions of systematic theology. For this reason it would not be fair to treat his suggestions as definite negation. We may, however, the more readily demur to the somewhat unscientific lines on which he is sometimes inclined to rule out what does not as yet fit in with his own conception of the universe. In this way he seems unnecessarily to go behind the alleged fact of what is commonly called the Virgin Birth in order to suggest that it is inadmissible. "If," he says, "for a Divine Incarnation we admit human parentage at all, we may as well admit it altogether. . . . Can a Divine Spirit not enter into a man born of two parents?"¹ We should reply that, prior to the facts, we do not know what is either possible or impossible. It is not a question of hesitating to admit that an incarnation is possible in the case of a human person entering the world in the usual manner.

¹ *Hibbert Journal*, vol. ii., No. 3, Art. "Suggestions towards the Reinterpretation of Christian Doctrine."

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If the Gospels asserted, which they do not, that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, we should have to judge of its credibility by the agreement of their statement with all the other facts of Christianity. But the line of argument adopted by the apologists of the Virgin Birth is often as faulty as that which is criticised in Sir Oliver Lodge. Emphasis is constantly laid upon the peculiar appropriateness of this method of Divine Manifestation, or even upon the inconceivability of any other mode whereby an incarnation might have been accomplished. This is surely in the highest degree precarious, not to say capable of being turned with uncomfortable effect against those who use it. If this were the case, why, we may ask, was it left to the Jewish author of the first Gospel to discover that parthenogenesis was involved in the well-known passage in the seventh of Isaiah? Why have we to go to religious systems remote from that into the midst of which Christ was born in order to find those parallels which in the minds of some tend to discredit the evangelical narrative? The world in which we live is inconceivable prior to its existence, and the future can never be exactly forecast on the basis of past experience.

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Whether, therefore, we tend to agree with Sir Oliver Lodge or with traditional orthodoxy, in either case, if we adopt the line of argument to which reference has been made, we are exposed to the criticism involved in Butler's deprecating reference to those "who indulge themselves in vain and idle speculations how the world might possibly have been framed."

What we have to recognise is the fact that in two of the Synoptic Gospels we have the story of Jesus Christ carried back beyond the point from which the apostolic witness to the Resurrection begins, namely, the baptism of our Lord and the testimony of John to His Messianic character. The details of the birth and early years of Jesus are supplied evidently in response to the demand of the primitive Church for satisfaction as to the origin and background of that career the consummation of which lay within the experience of the first preachers of the Gospel. The two accounts, though divergent in other respects, agree in making Bethlehem the scene of the Nativity, and in representing the Son of Mary as "conceived by the Holy Ghost." Whatever may be said of the Matthean account, the sources of which it is still

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difficult to trace, the character of St. Luke as a historian, which through the labours of Sir William Ramsay and others is now increasingly recognised, is almost sufficient in itself to show that the virginity of Mary was accepted in apostolic circles. Its incorporation in the creed of the second century is sufficiently explained by the fact that, as the epistles of Ignatius abundantly testify, it was already, like the Cross and Resurrection, regarded as a significant fact by the immediate successors of the apostles themselves. And, if we reject it, we are left to explain, as best we may, the remarkable decision with which St. Paul anticipates the Fourth Gospel, in recognising the relation of Jesus to the universe as the image of the invisible God, as the "firstborn of all creation" and the sustainer of all things, as the second Adam, in whom as a quickening spirit all things are summed up. This teaching is the more significant inasmuch as it was decisively and without argument asserted against certain members of the Christian community who declined to accept any such inference from the facts of the public apostolic preaching, which in common with St. Paul they had accepted. The Judaisers, as they are commonly

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called, against whom St. Paul had to defend his apostleship and gospel in Second Corinthians and Galatians, subsequently proved their divergence from apostolic Christianity by crystallising into Ebionite sects, among whom the Virgin Birth began to be rejected, for no other reason than its incompatibility with their narrow view of Jesus as a merely human Messiah. This supplies us with the clue to the unhesitating doctrine of the New Testament concerning the Eternal Word, the express image of the Father's Being, "through whom also He made the world." The Pente-costal preaching is explained by the apostolic belief that Jesus was exalted as Prince and Saviour through the Resurrection. Does not the immediate expansion of this teaching into that which separated the apostolic Church from those imperfect Hebrew Christians who found a temporary home within it, rest similarly on the disclosure by St. Mary of the Virgin Birth, as completing the interpretation of His Personality?

Yet once again, are we not apt to impale our thought on a preconceived theory of the mode of the Incarnation, which appears to us necessary for adjusting a true Godhead to a perfect manhood? When we bear in mind

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that our recognition of the Deity of Christ is dependent upon our observation of the facts of His Personality, the construction of any theory of Kenosis, or self-emptying, seems wholly irrelevant to the issue. Jesus is God. Yes. But what was it necessary for Him to give up in order that He might become man? Are we not in danger of constructing a theory of Divine Manifestation upon those very "attributes of God" which, apart from the "observation of facts," are a very insecure foundation? Are we even sure that the appearance of God in human life of itself involves any abnegation which can fairly be called limitation at all? It is, indeed, true that St. Paul incites to humility by the consideration of the humiliation through which our Lord passed to His high exaltation. But it is the assumption of the form of a slave which in the Epistle to the Philippians he recognises as the supreme act of sacrifice; the assumption, that is, of human nature under conditions which subjected the Redeemer to the shameful cross, the felon's death, the servile execution. It is, in fact, by sharing the body of our humiliation, not by wearing the glorified humanity which He calls us to share, that the Son of God

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becomes for all mankind a pattern of great humility. It is an abasement to be identified, as the apostles believed, as the New Testament declares, and as Christ Himself knew that He was, with the sin of the world. But if the facts of the case point—I do not say that they point—to ignorance on the part of our Lord concerning the authorship of this or that portion of the Old Testament, I do not see that it helps me to preface my acknowledgment of the fact by a statement that we have here an instance of the voluntary surrender by the Eternal Son of an omniscience that was properly His. A theory such as this does not in the slightest degree explain the mystery. It is only a form of words, by the use of which we are enabled to pay homage to our preconceived theory of God, and to save the appearance of a consistent view of His attributes.

There is nothing, however, so efficacious as a persistent endeavour to be at all costs true to all the facts of our blessed Lord's earthly life in correcting those narrow views of God, which by rounding off His character and attributes fail to recognise that reality is always broader than our intelligence even to the extent of apparent contradiction; that the

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universe is not foursquare with our understanding of it; and that, while enough of that concrete Personality which, without comprehending Him, we call God, has been made known to draw us to Himself as our Father, yet of His power and His wisdom and even of His love we are, and for the present at any rate must remain, incompetent judges.

II

CHRIST, TEMPTATION, AND SIN

IN his Church Congress paper on St. Mark's Gospel, Professor Burkitt observes that "the important thing for us to know is not 'Was Christ sinless?' but 'What was His virtue?'" This I take to mean that, inasmuch as Christianity is a great phenomenon which requires to be scientifically explained, we must read the Gospels for an account of its origin, and inquire what are the elements in the life and work of Christ which have made His Personality operative in the production of the great Christian institution which we call the Church. It is for this reason that, apart from other considerations, the Gospel according to St. Mark is of primary importance; because it shows the process by which our Lord broke with the Synagogue and became the Founder of the Church. It is the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Bigg has reminded us that the era in

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which Church history could be regarded as a series of portraits of eminent clergymen has passed away. And, with all reverence be it said, we no longer crave as men did a generation ago for a biography of Jesus, such as no evangelist has given us, as of a unique figure in the portrait-gallery of human excellence. Dr. Sanday's "Outlines of the Life of Christ" is of very different quality from Farrar's well-known work. It satisfies a different need. It exhibits another motive and purpose. What men study now is the fact of Christianity and, as central to this inquiry, the fact of Christ. Like the first Christian teachers, we are not primarily concerned "to know Christ after the flesh." But unlike those who were in immediate and living contact with the events out of which their salvation arose, it is necessary for us, at a distance of well-nigh two thousand years from our Christian origins, to reconstruct, to re-present, with the aid of the historical materials at our command, the earthly life of our Lord. Our aim, however, is not to isolate, but to connect, in order that we may answer the question, "What is Christianity?"

When we look at the matter thus, the question of the sinlessness of Jesus begins to assume very different proportions. We

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begin to ask ourselves why it is that we have laid upon this problem a stress which we certainly do not find in the New Testament. It will be replied that Christ is God, and a sinless manhood is of vital importance to His Deity. True, but we have reached our belief in His Divinity long before we have been able to establish His freedom from sin, and on evidence far other than what would be necessary to establish His moral perfection. We have hailed the power of Jesus' Name, we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world, before we have so penetrated the recesses of His Personality as to assure ourselves not only that "this man hath done nothing amiss," but that His inmost soul is white. So that it is rather true that we pronounce Jesus without sin because He is God than Divine because sinless. We approach the life of Christ without any such premiss, intent only on what He said, did, suffered, and in the end triumphantly achieved. He is for ever marked off as the Son of God, not by any vague, shifting, general impression of His character, but by a definite and concrete victory—the resurrection from the dead.

"What," again to quote Professor Burkitt,

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“is the historical importance of our Lord’s work? What was the essential point of His ministry? The Church’s answer is clear—our Lord’s Passion and Resurrection. . . . His real work—the work which, in all reverence be it said, He actually achieved in this life—was the foundation of the Christian Church.”¹

Yes, this surely is the main point that must always occupy the attention of thoughtful Christians—namely, what Christ did, what He has actually accomplished, and may we not add, what Christ is doing to-day. For the great crucial fact of the Resurrection is the point of transition from the foundation of the Christian Society, which was the work of the ministry, and the abiding work which goes forward throughout the ages in a Society identical with that of whose first beginnings we read in the Gospel, when “Jesus called unto Him those whom He Himself would,”² and continued in being by the power of the indissoluble life. His authority on earth to forgive sin, far more than any supposed record of His own sinlessness, is the perpetual witness to the Godhead of the Son of Man. Thus Athanasius in his famous panegyric on the

¹ See Church Congress Report (Liverpool, 1904).

² Mark iii.¹³–19.

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triumph of the risen Saviour: "They who become Christ's disciples, though indeed they war not with one another, yet by their life and virtuous deeds set themselves in array against demons, whom they put to rout, deriding their captain, the devil. In youth they are chaste; in trials patient; in labours steadfast. Being reviled they endure. They despise the spoiling of their goods. And, O wonder of wonders! they despise even death itself, and become Christ's witnesses."¹

This is our Lord's virtue. We are dealing with concrete, tangible realities. But, if I mistake not, we are on wholly different ground when we come to consider the abstract question of His sinlessness. In the first place, is it really possible to form such an induction of the activities of any personality that we may assert a moral miracle beside which parthenogenesis pales into insignificance? No man has any personal experience of sinlessness. Tennyson speaks of the nun confessing "what her all but utter whiteness took for sin." Our observation of any character can lead us no further. I doubt, therefore, whether even the disciples who were with Christ in His temptations could have gone so far as to prove the

¹ *De Incarnatione*, lii.

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negative involved in the conception of sinlessness. This is ultimately the reason why the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is untenable. Not even the legendary Assumption, supposed a fact, can attest such a proposition as this, the evidence for which lies outside human experience.

But even supposing that a verdict of this sort concerning our Lord were possible for an apostle, surely the case is very different for those who, like ourselves, depend upon fragments of the life-story of Jesus Christ for our knowledge of His Personality. Enough is given to assure us of a character so remarkable that we may well believe that the judgment of mankind has been right in according to it a unique position in history. But is it quite certain that, if we put on one side the supreme inference from that particular class of facts which culminated in the Resurrection and which in the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul sums up under the term *δύναμις* (power),¹ there are not some even of the recorded words and acts of Jesus which must at least be treated as equivocal? If Christ be indeed God, few narratives are more valuable than that of the Gadarene swine.

¹ Rom. i. 4.

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Does it not seem to lift the curtain that veils the spiritual forces that day by day are at work behind the meaningless disasters which attend the progress of history? It is otherwise, however, if this truth be doubted. So abhorrent to the keen moral sense of James Martineau were such claims as those which in St. Matthew are mingled with the gracious invitation to the weary and heavy-laden, that this devout Unitarian was obliged to regard them as apocryphal additions to the Gospel. Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, coloured though it is with the fastidious sensibility of its author, witnesses nevertheless to the necessity of attributing infirmity to Him whose divine title is rejected. The conception of sin only enters when we come to appraise the value of actions, and this must be to some extent a matter of opinion.

We cannot, then, assert the sinlessness of Jesus until we are assured that He is God. When we have attained this conviction, the other is but a truism, a platitude, a proposition that does not need statement. The truth about His humanity, of which experience can assure us, is that it is real. Jesus determines His own destiny, is the maker of His own future. His very power to succour us depends

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on the common brotherhood. Our temptations are His—"in all points."¹ With our infirmity He is encompassed. By suffering He learns.² All this was, and is, an induction based on experience. And it is this which was important. It is here, however, that the difficulty arises. "Without sin"—"separate from sinners"—after all the limitation must be introduced sooner or later. But this is precisely what robs temptation of all reality, or at any rate of all resemblance to that trial of our personality which with us is a bitter experience. It is impossible to go further without a more precise understanding of what is meant by sin. What is it that we must refuse to predicate of our blessed Lord?

Now what do we mean when we speak of a consciousness of sin? Let us translate it into the Biblical phrase "conscience of sins" and we shall begin to understand. St. Paul says that when there is no law, sin is not reckoned.³ We cannot, in fact, reckon it to ourselves except as trespasses. The General Confession expresses the fact of experience in the words, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep." Sin, then, is something in

¹ Heb. iv. 15.

² Heb. v. 8.

³ Rom. v. 13.

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our past, something that we have done, which interposes a barrier between ourselves and God. Of original sin we have, and can have, no inward experience. As a Christian doctrine it is an explanation, or at least an expression, of the fact that all men have this conscience of sins.

It will be necessary at this point briefly to anticipate what will receive a fuller treatment in a later chapter. Original sin is often conceived in popular language as a bias of the will ; a warp, flaw, or virus in the nature ; a bad heredity. The last phrase is, of course, an attempt to express it in terms of Darwinianism. The others are none of them biblical, though speculation from Augustine onward has tended to move along these lines, and in consequence to colour not only thought but language. I should hold that, while there is nothing in the ninth article of the Church of England to commit the signatory to Augustinianism, it would nevertheless have found a different expression but for the point of view that prevailed in the sixteenth century. But I cannot think the criticism of Dr. Tennant¹ altogether happy, as, in his eagerness to

¹ In his Hulsean Lectures on The Origin and Propagation of Sin.

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avoid a conflict with physical science, he seems to lapse into a position that is scarcely distinguishable from an unscriptural Pelagianism. It is always dangerous to deal in matters affecting religion and science, without passing the ideas of both, as Dr. Tennant hardly seems to have done, through the clearing-house of philosophy. Where, however, this writer makes out a good case is in asserting that sin must always involve a voluntary determination of the self-conscious personality. This is undoubtedly Pauline theology, for which sin is always "without excuse." "Knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful."¹ To this view the apostle is constant even when he is dealing with the solidarity of the race in respect of Adam's transgression. "Death," he says, "made its way through to all mankind," not because all inherited a disposition to sin, but "because all sinned."² The conviction grows in the mind that St. Paul has no idea of an inherited disposition to sin as interposed between Adam's trespass and the transgressions of men, which would be to introduce an element of irresponsibility in the case of the individual. What he does appear to mean may perhaps best be

¹ Rom. i. 20, 21.

² Rom. v. 12.

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explained by an analogy. We are told that the life history of every one of us in its antenatal condition recapitulates "the successive ancestral stages through which the present condition has been acquired." Is it not something akin to this in the spiritual sphere which the Rabbis tried to express in the statement that "every man is the Adam of his own soul"? Even Augustine, I believe, is responsible for the assertion that sin "*non innocentibus sed reis imputatur.*"¹ And certainly St. Paul, with his emphatic "sin is not reckoned when there is no law," taken in connection with his declaration that "the Gentiles which have not the law are a law unto themselves," does not seem to me to countenance the theory of inherent defect of will. And it will be remembered that the relation of the believer to Christ, which is parallel to the connection of the sinner with Adam, involves the recapitulation of the death, burial, and resurrection in the experience of the redeemed. I do not suppose that St. Paul ever quite gets all this clear, much less that his theology involves any particular philosophy, as writers like Dr. Inge appear to imagine. But I am quite sure that with him, as with all

¹ "Is reckoned not to innocent but to guilty persons."

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theologians of repute, there is no intention to state sin, whether actual or original, as involving any elements inconsistent with the voluntary withdrawal of the self-determining personality from allegiance to God. If this be so then it is at once evident that sin and the Son of God are incompatible ideas.

The difficulty, however, which people feel in attributing a true human experience to Christ, if sin be excepted, is due in great measure to the confusion between sin and the capacity for sin. If it be once understood that sin, so far as it is represented in experience, is a conscience that accuses us of past transgressions, then we may fairly ask ourselves whether it is necessary to assume a similar conscience in others in order to assure ourselves that their temptations are as real as our own. We may know that previous acts of compliance add to the force of any given temptation. But such knowledge is not part of our actual experience under stress of temptation, any more than the knowledge of the physiology of sensation alters the taste of wine or the smell of a rose. That there was no record of transgression against Him who was tempted to make stones bread or to cast Himself down from the Temple would make

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no difference to the reality of the temptation. It may well be, as Dr. Mason suggests, that a character hitherto unstained would be exposed to a fiercer conflict with the Evil One than if it were blunted by previous surrenders.¹ But the situation would be entirely altered if we were driven to believe that the divinity of Christ was such a prophylactic against assault that the issue was predetermined, so far as the will of the Tempted was concerned, that Satan battered against walls of adamant, that the heart of the Saviour was encased in impervious steel. A deduction from the Godhead of Christ such as this would in effect make us unable to agree with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews that, because Jesus suffered being tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted. The earthly life of our Lord would be reduced to a docetic pageant, and He, who is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, would become one who at best had taken upon Him the nature of an unsympathetic angel. The salvation of the world would thus have become the mechanical contrivance of an official mediator, making no appeal and carrying no conviction to the consciences of men.

¹ The Faith of the Gospel, c. vi. § 13.

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It is here that it becomes us to be severely inductive. We must remember that we hail Christ as God in consequence of a fact which lies beyond His earthly life. Though our heart may have burned within us as He republished the Law of God from the mountain, as He fed the fainting multitudes in the inhospitable desert, or was transfigured before us in the holy mount, not until He has risen from the dead are we able to enthrone Him for ever in our hearts as Lord of all. Surely we must bring to this ever-enlarging experience of Him who has the words of eternal life, as we follow Him from the carpenter's bench to His place among the golden candlesticks, eyes unblinded by theological prejudice, hearts unsophisticated by religious philosophy. The mind of the Master can only be interpreted by the minds of children, whose simplicity will not discount an agony or misunderstand a bloody sweat. Life is so full of paradoxes, for the solution of which we must be content to trust God and the future, that upon the same knees we may well leave this problem also. I do not know why God gave to me the dread capacity of sin. I do know that my Saviour has overcome, and sat down with the Father upon His throne.

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Of course we must not allow ourselves to forget that will is an abstraction from personality. We cannot, therefore, treat this function or faculty, or whatever we may call it, as a part of a spiritual nature which is capable of detachment from the whole, and the laws of which we may study as though it possessed an actual, concrete, separate reality. Will, we say, is free, and cannot be conceived otherwise than as the power of choosing between motives. Everything, therefore, that depends on the action of will might have been otherwise. The future is never predetermined but always hangs in suspense. And we speak of God as the Eternal Will. Do we mean, then, that before Him, as before us whom He has created in His image, there is set the tremendous choice between life and death, blessing and cursing, good and evil, love and hate? There is only one ultimate answer. Not "God cannot be tempted of evil," which asserts the Divine goodness only at the expense of the Divine freedom. We must reply with the agnostic Preacher, "God is in heaven and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."¹

Considerations such as these ought to pre-

¹ Eccles. v. 2.

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vent us from even introducing into the contemplation of the earthly life of Christ any abstract problems such as arise out of the assumption of His Godhead, much less any that may be suggested by the imaginative difficulty of realising how God may become man. He could be born, and discharge the functions of a human body; He could toil, weep, suffer, die—but He could not sin. Is it sacrilegious to refuse to assent to the latter proposition? This I do not wish either to affirm or deny. I only plead that a reverent agnosticism bars all such preliminary discussion before we approach in all simplicity the fact of Christ. With Andrew and the rest of the disciples we must “come and see.” We must follow what a recent writer has not inappropriately called “the sequence of experiences, the chronology of conviction.”¹

We have, then, to ask how those, to whom our Lord imparted the account of His temptation in the wilderness, would receive their Master’s story of His conflict with Satan. Would they suppose, if I may so put it, that the fainting soul of Jesus could not have yielded to the suggestion that He should

¹ Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, .37.

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make the stones bread? Would they dream that the panorama of the world's kingdoms had no real fascination for His dazzled eyes as they swept the wide landscape? Would they imagine that there was no moment of suspense as He stood on the pinnacle of the Temple and the issue of the world's salvation hung on the one thread of His fidelity to God? I cannot doubt for a moment that they would thank God for the steadfastness of their Teacher's faith and the victorious loyalty that at tremendous cost overcame a strong man's temptations. Or can we suppose that the apostle Peter, even when He looked back upon the experience of that three years' companionship from the vantage-ground of his later apostleship, never trembled at the remembrance that there had come a moment in his relations with the Messiah when his own suggestions might have ruined the cause, in which he too, was at length to suffer? If so, it would never have been possible for St. Mark to transcribe from his notes of the apostle's preaching: "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." If it were not, according to all human methods of calculation, a real possibility that things

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might have been otherwise in the Garden of Gethsemane, our explanation of the bloody sweat would, indeed, have to be sophistical.

It will probably appear from what has been said that I should hesitate to use some of the language which Dr. Mason, for example, adopts in the second chapter of his Paddock Lectures, when he is dealing with "the development of our Lord's moral character as man." I should not be inclined to say that Christ came into the world "without that vitiation of His first movements which we call by the name of original sin."¹ I have already tried to explain that I cannot regard sin otherwise than as itself an activity of the personality. To introduce the Augustinian idea of vitiation (*vitium*) not only confuses thought but, as it appears to me, separates our Lord from His fellow-men in a way not compatible with an unprejudiced reading of the facts. No doubt the statement is immediately qualified by the refusal to regard sin as inherent in the nature apart from the will, but it is the use of the word "vitiation" which seems to me in itself open to objection, as involving a postulate that

¹ The Conditions of our Lord's Life on Earth, p. 52.

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lies wholly outside experience. For I do not think we can say that by experience "we know too well the force with which temptation comes to us again *on the score of having been yielded to before.*"¹ We may infer, from experience it may be, that our previous compliance has caused the temptation to recur with increased violence. But it may still be that some temptation never before presented may exceed in force any whereby we have been previously assailed. Sin always has reference to the past, but, though there may be a general conviction that the future is likely to resemble the past, I do not feel my will any the less whole in relation to a determination which I have still to make. If, therefore, another possesses the same power of will, I am at once assured of his essential kinship to myself. And I should once again hesitate to make my own the further suggestion of Dr. Mason, that "we might perhaps, never have imagined that Christ was tempted, if He had not Himself disclosed the fact to His disciples."² A Gnostic of the second century would doubtless have believed it impossible. But apart from the fact that I

¹ The Conditions of our Lord's Life on Earth, p. 65.

² Ibid., p. 58.

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should distrust all preconceived ideas, I cannot imagine any strong man, who knows what his own victories have cost him, failing to believe, in proportion as he realised the strength of Jesus Christ, that the Epistle to the Hebrews rightly described Him as learning obedience through personal suffering. It is just the wise reticence both of speech and thought that refuses any speculations beyond the legitimate inferences of the manifestations themselves for which I plead. And when it has once been asserted that "being what He was, it was inconceivable that [Christ] should really fall," I find myself unable to give any intelligible meaning to the suggestion that "*perhaps all the more* He was permitted to experience to the full all the hardship of doing right."¹ This seems to admit us to a wilderness of possibilities about as fruitful as the hymn for St. Bartholomew's day, the only conclusion of which is that "none can tell us."² By legitimate inference of course is meant, not an inference with regard to one manifestation based upon our experience of another, but what, applying the standard of our own

¹ The Conditions of our Lord's Life on Earth, pp. 64, 65.

² Hymns Ancient and Modern.

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personality to their interpretation, we should judge to be the personal activities of which the facts are the outward sign.

But there is one conclusion from the temptations of our Lord which at any rate we must rigidly avoid. We cannot hold that what the Scripture says concerning any of Christ's external experiences, it saith, like the precepts of the Old Testament about oxen according to St. Paul's view, "altogether for our sake."¹ I wonder how many of our hypocrisies with regard to the Christian life may not have their root in this false view of our Saviour's own experience as partaking of the nature of an unreality except in its relation to the lives of those He came to save. Surely Christ's life, if it is a real life, has a moral aim, a spiritual value, a personal ideal apart from the external effect which it produces upon those who are called to follow the example of His great humility. A life cannot really be an example unless it has a meaning of its own quite independently of those for whom it serves as an example. We fail to give adequate expression to the thought of the high-priestly prayer, in which Jesus declares that He consecrates Himself for the sake of His

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 9.

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disciples, unless it be observed that this separation involves not only the exterior career with its consummation on Calvary, but the whole interior world of motive, purpose, and will directed to the obedience of the Father. The Personality of Jesus would have reached the Cross had there been no souls to save and no brethren to redeem. We should appropriately call it an external experience, if we could imagine our Lord as having willed to endure the Cross only because this particular method of salvation was requisite in order that the world might be reconciled to God, as exposure to the risks of a whirling stream might be necessary for the rescue of a drowning man. All the evidence points to the fact that the mediæval idea of the supererogatory merits of Christ represents a failure to realise the extent of the Passion, because while it rightly insists on the redemptive act of the Crucifixion, it dissociates that act from the Personality, the theory being that Christ's Righteousness, beyond the death of the Cross, is not involved in the obedience which wrought salvation. Our Gospel is the Cross only because we preach Christ crucified. We see at once what this means, if we try for one moment to con-

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ceive of the Son of God as assuming manhood and ascending the Cross otherwise than as the climax of an earthly life. The life story of Jesus is not merely the accessories of a dramatic event, designed to invest Golgotha with verisimilitude.

We shall do well to remind ourselves of this characteristic of Christ's life on earth in relation to our own activities. Mention was made above of the hypocrisies of Christian conduct. There is a danger, more especially characteristic of the clerical calling, lest we introduce an atmosphere of unreality into our lives by the constant effort to view them as "ensamples to the flock," till at last we deceive ourselves into supposing that we indulge in recreations, accept invitations, smoke our pipes, nay even eat and drink, professionally. It is very easy to increase our hours of work to any extent, if we include the dinner-hour, because of the opportunity it affords of showing a Christian example to the maidservant. Let it be said with all reverence—our Blessed Lord did not endure temptation in an official capacity.

What we have tried to see, then, is that in approaching the subject of our Lord's sinlessness we must first accurately define what the Bible means by sin. If, whether predicable of

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any personality as a result of or antecedently to experience, sin is always disloyalty to God, then Jesus is God and *cadit quæstio*. If, however, what is really meant is simply a genuine liability to temptation, in the sense that, human choice not being predetermined externally to the will, the issue of conflict is not a foregone conclusion, then we must be prepared to rely on the evidence of the facts, which clearly reveal an independence of moral choice on the part of Jesus as of all men; the most perilous course being here, as ever, to argue downwards from the supposed attributes of Deity to the facts of experience. And no one would surely argue on the facts of the Gospel narrative, apart from the final conclusion involved in the Resurrection, that the future of Jesus of Nazareth was less in His own hands—if the expression may be allowed—than the future of any other man. The Cross was a supreme opportunity—the Waterloo, to compare small with great, of the Son of Man and His antagonist the Devil.

One other thing remains to be said. Christ knew no sin. True, and yet the testimony of the New Testament never wavers in its recognition of an identification of the Saviour with sin which, though it cannot make Him a

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sinner, yet makes the guilt of sin as applied to Him something more than a formal imputation. Luther was only stating in the form of a brilliant paradox the very essence of the Pauline doctrine of justification when he exclaimed, "Ego sum tuum peccatum, tu es justitia mea." The experience of which this is the theological expression is not so much that of the earthly life of our Lord, the historical Christ who is known after the flesh, as of that interpretation of the victorious Cross which is given in the joy of pardoned sin. It is quite true that, if we are at all to enter into the mind of St. Paul, we must give, as the great German reformer did, full force to the doctrine that by an act of free favour God in Christ accounts the impious righteous. The personal appeal of the Gospel is obscured, its moral and spiritual power impaired, by substituting the infusion of Christ's righteousness through sacramental or other channels for the blotting out of transgressions. But it is equally un-Pauline not to observe that the doctrine of the second Adam involves a real identification, which avails no less for the justification of the sinner than for his progressive growth in holiness. Union with Adam's transgression is not, as we saw, ex-

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pressed in a teaching of inherited tendency, but in the statement that "all sinned." Ought we to shrink from the converse, involved, as I think, in such language as "He was made sin for us," namely, that Christ has only made the new life possible for us, because He endured the consequences of a guilt that was really His?

How elusive this mysterious truth is will at once appear from the fact that it can only be conveyed in words that must never be torn from the most carefully guarded context. Yet surely something of the kind is needed even to give full expression to the facts of our Lord's human story. To say nothing of the dereliction of Calvary, there is a solidarity between His life and our own, which we instinctively feel to be something more in relation to sin than submission to the common experiences of a sinful world. What exactly this connection may be it is far more difficult even to suggest. It may be remembered that Edward Irving was deposed from the ministry of the Established Church of Scotland for asserting the peccability of our Lord. He was one of the pioneers of that revived study of the Incarnation which was characteristic of the theology of the last century, and more-

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over he was one of those men who, as S. T. Coleridge said of him, see great ideas looming through the mist. That he used language which it was difficult to square with traditional orthodoxy, we may well believe. But those, who have most fully appreciated the mind of this singular religious genius, have always insisted that he was only trying to express a truth which his accusers deemed heretical because they could not understand. However this may be, I feel sure that we fall short of a full expression even of what may be apprehended by mortal man in the atoning work of our Divine Redeemer, if we fail to perceive that He paid the price of our sins because He "bore" them in His body. For, when we have asserted that Christ bore away the sins because He bore the penalty, we are only, after all, on the fringe of the reality.

III

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THERE is no part of Christian teaching with regard to which it is more important to get back to the facts of the New Testament than the doctrine of the Atonement. Much that is written on this subject fails altogether to start from an exact study of the origins of Christianity, and arises out of certain ethical prejudices which make the modern writer more anxious to assert what the doctrine is not than what it is. This would not be the case if Christianity were regarded as essentially a religion of Atonement rather than of Incarnation. It would be impossible to eliminate from a system, in which Reconciliation is so prominent, as in the Epistle to the Romans, and sacrifice plays so important a part, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, all those ideas which are summed up in the conception of Atonement. But the tendency of modern theology has been rather to represent

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Atonement as an inseparable accident of Incarnation in an imperfect world than to view Incarnation as an essential preliminary to Atonement.

It is not difficult, in view of those tendencies of modern thought which have given a new currency to the philosophy of Divine Immanence, to understand the appeal which Christianity has made to many minds under that aspect which describes it as the religion of the Incarnation. It is, of course, one thing to believe that the one God is ever manifesting Himself in many parts and in various modes, and quite another to behold His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Those who thankfully accept Christ as the perfect revelation of the eternal Father have in the fullest sense of the word a religion, for in Christ they enter into personal relations with God, and to a religion it is essential that it should profess to afford such a relationship to the sons of men. But, except in so far as they recognise the inadequacy of other religions, they fail to pay due regard to that which from the beginning has made the faith of the Church a Gospel, a message of glad tidings, a reconciliation as distinguished from a mystical union.

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In certain quarters it has been urged that historical Christianity is to be judged by the standard of the creeds, and that these emphasise the Incarnation rather than the Atonement. We must begin by drawing a very clear distinction between creeds, as since the fourth century they have become a bulwark against heresy, and creeds in their original intention as summaries of catechetical teaching. The Apostles' or Western Creed, which was not incorporated in the decrees of ecclesiastical councils, is the best illustration of earlier usage. And it may at once be seriously questioned whether the Incarnation is the aspect of the Christian facts which this formula is intended to present. If Harnack is right in his conception of the stages by which its development was accomplished, its earliest form, taken alone, might well be regarded as ambiguous in its bearing on the Athanasian faith.¹ But it is not necessary to adopt conjectures as to the process of the evolution of what to-day is called the Apostles' Creed in order to reconstruct the teaching of which it is the summary. "You are about to be admitted," says the cate-

¹ See *Das apostolische Glaubensbekenntniss*, Eng. Tr. (Mrs. H. Ward).

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chist to his candidates for baptism, "into the society which is called the Holy Catholic Church. There you will receive the forgiveness of sins, the pledge to you of the resurrection of the flesh and life eternal. This will be yours through the Holy Ghost that shall be given to you, the promise of the Father who made heaven and earth, who gave His Son Jesus to be born of a virgin, crucified, dead, and buried, and who raised Him up the third day, to be exalted as a Prince and a Saviour till He comes again to judge the quick and dead." Surely it is the early Petrine preaching, as recorded in the Acts, which is vividly recalled in almost every clause of the Apostles' Creed; and it is the facts connected with the death of Christ that form the bulk of its second paragraph.

But, when the appeal is made to the Catholic creeds, it is usually the Nicene Faith that is uppermost in thought, the doctrine of the Logos as guarded by the famous Homoousion. It is the circle of ideas which become prominent in relation to the definition of the Person of Christ, as of one substance with the Father, that is suggested to the mind by the doctrine of the Incarnation. On this we have to observe that in one sense a doctrine

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cannot be properly represented by a creed. If it is true that the Church has never defined the doctrine of the Atonement, it is equally true that it has not defined the doctrine of the Incarnation. What, however, is certain is that the teaching of Arius, as of the other heretics with whom the councils were called upon to deal, was fatal to the doctrine whether of the Incarnation or of the Atonement. Whichever is the leading aspect of Christianity, those who stood for the apostolic tradition were bound to oppose those who promulgated the theory that there was a time when the Son of God was not. And Harnack has justly pointed out in his "History of Dogma" that Athanasius himself, though as an Alexandrian he had philosophic sympathies with the doctrine of the Logos independently of the immediate controversy, nevertheless discerned that it was the practical issues of Christianity as a redemption which were involved in the assertion that He who was completely man was also truly God. But from the days of Clement and Origen the thoughts of Alexandrian and Eastern theologians had been turned to those philosophic aspects of Christianity, which were present to the minds of St. Paul and

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St. John; and it is no cause for wonder that, when the course of speculation demanded a definition like the Homocousion,¹ which was necessarily expressed in terms of the dialectic of the period, the thought of the fourth century should have expanded in the direction of Christian Platonism rather than of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ's atoning work.

What we should be disposed, therefore, to say is that the appeal to the creeds, as the determining factor in deciding what are the proportions of historic Christianity, is in effect an appeal to the fourth century, to Greek Christianity, which, whatever its glories (and they are many), is something narrower and more partial than "the whole counsel of God" as set forth by a St. Paul or a St. John. It is a wide gulf that separates the New Testament from ecclesiastical literature. Nothing more surely witnesses to the "inspiration" of the apostolic writers than the extraordinary onesidedness, as compared with their teaching, of the ideas, the facets of Christianity, apprehended, for example, by those whom we call the Apostolic Fathers. While Clement and Ignatius are important

¹ The phrase "Being of one substance with the Father."

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witnesses of what they were able to grasp, we feel at once that in the New Testament there are depths for the Divine Spirit to plumb, heights for the Church of future ages to scale, wholly unrepresented in the Christian literature which immediately succeeds to it. The same is true of the Schoolmen or the divines of the Reformation. And the great Greek theologians, though their mental and spiritual range is infinitely greater than that, shall we say, of the Epistle of Barnabas or the Shepherd of Hermas ; though in a special degree they were suited to accomplish that particular task which secured the identity of Jesus as the Eternal Son of God ; were, perhaps in virtue of that peculiar quality of thought which established the faith of Nicæa, less capable than others, whose minds were undisturbed by heresies that denied the Saviour, of fastening their attention upon the salvation which He came to bring.

And there are considerations connected with the establishment of the Church in human society which, apart from the examination of the New Testament itself, prepare us for the discovery that not the Incarnation but the Atonement is the central aspect of the Christian facts. One is that the symbol of

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Christianity in every age is the Cross. The reredos of St. Paul's Cathedral, with its great representation of the Crucifixion and the legend "Sic Deus dilexit mundum," preserves, as we instinctively feel, the proportion of faith, which would to some extent have been lost, had the same legend been attached to the Madonna and Child. It is the Cross which is held before dying eyes. Again, the Gnosticism of the second century, a peril as formidable as Arianism, though no definition was formulated against it, denied, it is true, the Incarnation. But it agreed with many thinkers of the present day, to whom, nevertheless, the Word made Flesh is the great reality, in seeing in the Christian teaching primarily an illumination, a manifestation, a revelation. Resistance to this peril, the claim made on behalf of Christianity to be a Gospel for the many, was only successfully achieved, because it was recognised as a Redemption. And lastly, we have to ask, What was it that caused the establishment of the Church in the Roman Empire? What gave to the Faith of Jesus its unique value as a religion, separating it from all competitors and satisfying a need that other claimants were incapable of fulfilling? Dr.

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Bigg, in his lectures on "The Church's Task in the Roman Empire," has answered this question by showing that whereas the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God was not unknown in paganism, and the idea of incarnation was anticipated in the Græco-Roman mythology, it was the Cross which was "the power of God unto salvation," the crowning glory of the message which the Christian society proclaimed to a weary world.¹

But it is, after all, the New Testament which must be the final arbitrator as to the true complexion of apostolic Christianity. What, in effect, was the Gospel as it was proclaimed by the first preachers, by the accredited witnesses of Jesus Christ? The point of view from which it is here proposed to approach this fundamental question is the experience and teaching of St. Paul.

Now, in the first instance, it must be borne in mind that the typical instance of Christian conversion is that of a man who, before the eventful change passed upon his life, afforded a high example of human character. St. Paul was a high ethical type before he was arrested by the heavenly vision on the road to Damascus. This fact is of very great

¹ Preface, xi.

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importance for theology. For it shows that while, of course, the man whose life has previously been vicious will necessarily abandon such courses when he is truly converted, conversion touches the personality at a point above the level of ordinary morality. This accounts for St. Paul's invariable attitude towards the objections against his interpretation of salvation, which those who, deficient in spiritual insight, levy toll on Christian doctrine in the interest of ethics, had already brought against his teaching before the Epistle to the Romans was written. He never explains away his paradox. His indignant "God forbid!" is the protest of the outraged moral sense at the bare suggestion that doctrines which are true in the spiritual region should for one moment be supposed to subvert fundamental ethical principles. "Let God be found true and every man a liar." "How shall God judge the world?"¹ To state the proposition that evil may be done in order that good may come, is its severest condemnation.

It is worth while to insist upon the high moral tone of St. Paul's mind apart altogether from his Christianity and before his

¹ Rom. iii. 4, 6.

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conversion, because this is the starting-point of that hunger and thirst for righteousness which Christ alone was able to satisfy. Touching the righteousness which is of the law none knew better than Paul himself that he was blameless. To suppose that as a Pharisee he went about to establish his own righteousness, in any purely legal sense such as would exclude a genuine passion for whatsoever things were honest and of good report, cannot be maintained. If there be any virtue and if there be any praise, it is certain that St. Paul had thought on these things before he saw Christ. He was, no doubt, one of those "good men," of whom he himself speaks, for whom one might even dare to die. That in his unenlightened zeal he persecuted the Church does not invalidate this conception of his genuine nobility. Only an imperfect historical sense classes all those who have adopted repressive measures in matters of religious opinion with murderers. Nothing shows more clearly the strength of what the eighteenth century would have called St. Paul's belief in natural religion than the first three chapters of Romans. For him the ultimate truth of existence is the tremendous fact that God is the Moral Governor of the

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world. His wrath is revealed even in the constitution and course of nature against all unrighteousness. Can any man think that he will escape the judgment of God, that "righteous judgment" wherein "He will render to every man according to his works"? His ethical sense possesses that keen edge which divides human society with a distinction more subtle than that of positive law or external custom. "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly." Conscience makes the heathen "a law unto themselves." He is not blind to whatsoever things were lovely in his pagan neighbours, when they did by nature the things of the law.

It is clear that in St. Paul's view nothing can abrogate these principles. It is also clear that from the ordinary human standpoint he was perfectly aware of his own correspondence with them. His was the *mens conscia recti* which must never be confused with complacency nor confounded with self-satisfaction. For alongside of his ethical idealism we can observe another temper, produced by it in the soul that is vividly aware of God, mingling with it apart from any taint of unreality, and distinguishing its possessor, in spite of sympathies with Greek culture, as a genuine

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Hebrew. This is the sense of sin, which grows with a stern devotion to duty and deepens with the clearer vision of God. Cant and hypocrisy, which simulate this experience in the conventional man who is "a Jew outwardly," only confirm the truth of the type, as a phenomenon which demands psychological analysis. St. Paul, whose utterances bear the stamp of a passionate sincerity, is a high instance of this frame of mind. Not only, as he looks back upon his previous history, does he recall and repeat the sob of a wounded conscience—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"¹—but even when he has grown old in his Master's service, he exclaims, "I am the chief of sinners."² This is as it should be, but as it could never be, if the desire of the man who is hungry for righteousness were simply to turn over a new leaf and do better for the future, or even to empty the character of selfishness and release the spirit from the power of evil habit in its outward activities. It would indeed be a stupid hypocrisy in the dying saint to carry the courtesy of self-depreciation into so manifest a conflict with fact.

The Greek philosopher is an artist in

¹ Rom. vii. 24.

² 1 Tim. i. 15.

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human conduct, and is without "conscience of sin," because while, like Plato, he may recognise the resistant character of the human material, yet for him past failures may be consigned to the scrap-heap of imperfect achievement, with a sigh perhaps for the unprofitable years, while the eye is steadily fixed on the Idea of Good. The servant of man has the future. To him the past belongs only as a lesson-book, which shall teach him what to seek and what to avoid, when the desire of service has been once awakened. His conception of punishment is a reformatory discipline. He is concerned not with what men are but with what they are tending to become.

But St. Paul only becomes intelligible when we perceive that he moves on a higher plane. With the Hebrew conception of sin we enter a region which, if we may coin a term on the analogy of the word "metaphysical," we may perhaps call "metethical." "Righteousness" is not an ideal, but a right relation to an eternal Person. It is right action in view of our responsibility to God. Conscience is only awakened when in the words of Handel we can exclaim, "I did see the great God," or when, like a greater than the composer of the "Messiah,"

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we are constrained to cry, "Woe is mè, I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." St. Paul sees "the wrath of God revealed." He is not seeking for any preliminary "justification," which may become a *point d'appui*, a beginning for the life of holiness, and be then remembered only with the gratitude that belongs to the gift of a new opportunity or a fresh start in life. The goads of conscience are for him but the anticipation of that day when we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat, and God shall render to every man according to his works. St. Paul going about to establish his own righteousness, or realising in the bitterness of his soul that "there is none that doeth good," or counting all things but loss that he may be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, is alike placing himself at the end of human probation. He is speaking as the man who has no future, and who sees himself in presence of the Eternal Judge, before whom the record of the past is, as it were, an eternally present fact. For conscience must be sharply distinguished from that desire for consecration which arises only when the soul feels the assurance, or at least the wistful anticipation, that its transgressions

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are pardoned and its sin covered. Every conscience-stricken man has already grown old, and gazing backward at a path strewn with lost opportunities covers his wrinkled face with his withered hands as he cries aloud, "I can never forgive myself."

It is this sense of the irretrievable past which thus holds an important place in the analysis of the human spirit, as ethics passes into religion. It can have no place, except as an incentive, in the scheme of the practical moralist. It may even interpose the obstacle of despair in the path of progress and reform. It is when we come to the pieties of human intercourse that men experience its sting. Years of atonement in the service of humanity will never efface from the memory of a penitent son the sob of a mother's broken heart. A lifetime of patient reparation will not cure the smart of a broken marriage vow, long since confessed and forgiven. It is no accident that in the parable of the Prodigal Son, while we read of the joy of the Father and the merrymaking of his house, the Prodigal himself is left confessing that he is no more worthy to be called a son.

Two facts bear abundant testimony to the accuracy of the representation here given of the

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state of St. Paul's mind when he thankfully receives the Gospel to the salvation of his soul. The first is his use of the word "justification." It is now generally acknowledged that the interpretation of this term which was given by the mediævalists in the Reformation controversy, and which, though finding no support in the Anglican Articles and rejected by representative Anglican divines like Richard Hooker,¹ has been revived by certain modern English theologians, as for instance Dr. Liddon, is inconsistent with Greek usage. The verb *δικαιοῦν* means "to account righteous," and no ingenuity will enable us to modify this interpretation. It does not mean "to make righteous," and all attempts to confuse it with sanctification must therefore be abandoned. But those who would identify justification with what they call imparted righteousness, in other words with holiness, are in one particular right. It is true that St. Paul thinks of himself as standing in God's presence for a final act of judgment. Of course in the order of the Christian life justification must precede sanctification. But this is only saying that to live as sons we must first receive the adoption of sons. On the other hand, "no condemnation" is the omega as it is

¹ See his Sermon on Justification.

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the alpha of Christian experience. It would not be consistent with Pauline theology to regard the preliminary justification as taking place on a basis of faith and the final acquittal as conditioned by imparted holiness. At the hour of his departure the apostle is still the chief of sinners, relying wholly on the merits of his Saviour. And, except in so far as the Day of Judgment may itself be a figure, justification is no forensic metaphor, which demands apology, but is the exact expression of that standing before God which is the thought uppermost in his mind. As a Pharisee he hopes to secure this acquittal by an impossible compliance. As a Christian he already listens to the divine assurance—

“ I’ll put into thy story
What I did.”¹

The other point is that the curse from which St. Paul seeks deliverance is, not an enfeebled will that makes future right action impossible, but an accumulated debt which cannot be paid. Bunyan’s great allegory accurately represents the experience of an awakened conscience when it describes the man with the burden on his back. This is repeatedly emphasised in the Pauline epistles. In the Romans sin incurs wages; there is none that

¹ C. Hervey’s *Comfort in Extremity* [The Synagogue].

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doeth good; by *works* of law no flesh is justified.¹ In Galatians it is the works of the flesh that are manifest.² In Colossians it is "the bond written in ordinances" that is against us;³ in the Ephesians "the forgiveness of our trespasses" that is equivalent to "our redemption through his blood."⁴ This is not only consistent with the common human experience which finds expression in the daily confession, "We have done those things which we ought not to have done," but it harmonises with the Lord's Prayer—"Forgive us our trespasses"; with the parable of the wicked servant—"I forgave thee all that debt"; and with the human name of the Messiah: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

We cannot forget that the deepest teaching of the Hebrew prophets was bound up with the idea of the forgiveness of sins, the payment of a debt which could alone repair the old wastes, a satisfaction of conscience which could alone fulfil the inexorable demands of the Eternal Order. Zion must be redeemed with God's own judgment. On a city and a people dead in trespasses and sins had fallen the eternal fire of a punishment irretrievable

¹ vi. 23; iii. 12, 20.

² v. 19.

³ ii. 14. - ⁴ i. 7.

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except in so far as the Father became the Redeemer, as the Law was vindicated by the suffering of God Himself, manifesting, as He trod the winepress alone, a righteousness in which the objects of His redemptive good pleasure should have no active part, a salvation which they could but stand and see. God's people could only be "builded as at the first," not on the principles of the old covenant wherein "God gave Israel a law," but on the basis of a new covenant wherein He forgives their iniquities. "This," says Jeremiah, "is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it . . . for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."¹ These were the channels along which the great evangelical prophet was led to delineate the most marvellous figure of the Old Testament, the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, and to wrest from the mysteries of Hebrew sacrifice that tremendous secret of Substitution, which at length was to make the life of Him, who was not a servant but the only-begotten Son, an offering for sin: "He was wounded for our transgres-

¹ xxxi. 33, 34.

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sions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”¹

We are now in a position to understand what the fact of his conversion meant to St. Paul. Hitherto we have been dealing with the preparation for the crucial revelation in the apostle's personal experience and in the spiritual history of his race. Not, of course, that it was all realised or expressed. We must always be careful not to confuse a logical order with a sequence in time. In view of a later experience what went before is interpreted as it never could have been, had the web of life been cut off at an earlier stage, and the earlier chapters of an *Apologia pro vita sua* can only be written in view of the later chapters that are to follow. It is characteristic of the Gospel to reveal men to themselves. It is Christ alone who can read—

“The spirit's strange deep longings,
Interpreting its need.”

When on the Damascus road the stricken Saul saw the crucified, risen, and ascended

¹ Isa. liii. 5, 6.

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Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth flashed upon his astonished eyes as the Righteous One. In view of the first preaching as it is recorded in the earlier chapters of the Acts; of St. Paul's own first impressions as they are summarised in his immediate testimony;¹ of his developed theory of salvation as a propitiation wherein God revealed His righteousness when, without impairing His justice, He became the justifier of them that believe in Jesus—in view of all these facts it is scarcely possible to doubt that in the exalted Son of Man he beheld Him of whom the prophet spoke, Jehovah's Righteous Servant who justifies many.

In the first place there is a remarkable unity of testimony in the preaching of the Day of Pentecost, in the speech delivered by St. Peter after the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, and in the prayer of the Church after the release of Peter and John by the Sanhedrin. What had been seen and heard on the Day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of those signs which, according to Joel, were to announce the establishment of the kingdom of Messiah. Jesus was that Messiah, who in sending forth the Spirit was

¹ Acts xxii. 3-21; xxvi. 2-23.

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accomplishing His promise. But His exaltation to the Father's right hand was itself the fulfilment of the predestinating purpose of God announced by the prophets in the picture of the Holy and Righteous One, Jehovah's suffering Servant. The man Jesus was that Servant. His Crucifixion and Burial satisfied what was foretold of His sufferings. When God raised Him from the dead, those sufferings were brought to a glorious issue, and in His Name forgiveness of sins was now proclaimed. This was how the apostles themselves understood their commission as witnesses to the Resurrection. The suffering Messiah was, if a phrase may be borrowed from the Ritschians, the regulative idea of their ministry. It is the Resurrection neither as a mere fact nor as a miracle but as a Gospel which they preached; the consecrated Servant who, having been led as a lamb to the slaughter, had now seen of the travail of His soul and been satisfied. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is no longer an ideal but a fact. This Petrine Gospel reappears in the theology of the First Epistle, where Jesus Christ is still the Lamb, bearing our sins in His body on the tree, the Shepherd who

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gives His life for the straying sheep and heals their wounds by the stripes which He receives.¹

St. Paul's theology is so emphatically the interpretation given in terms of reflection to the fact of his conversion, that it becomes of the first importance to notice what was the set that this great crisis from the first imparted to his spiritual thought, what the turn given to his testimony. It is clear that he regarded himself as entrusted by the risen Jesus with an irreducible and inalienable message. This was his "gospel," which he must hand on, undisguised by the arts of a persuasive rhetoric, unimpaired by the explanations of a critical intellect.² "Though we, or an angel from heaven," he says to the Galatians, "should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."³ Looking first at the Acts of the Apostles, we take the two accounts which St. Paul himself gives of his conversion. Before the Sanhedrin, as already noticed, he speaks of what he then saw and heard as revealing to him the Righteous One. In the court of the Roman procurator he

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 24, 25.

² 1 Cor. i. 18, 25 ; ii. 1-4, 13.

³ Gal. i. 9.

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declares himself as having been appointed a minister to the Gentiles as well as to the people of Israel for the proclamation of Jesus as a suffering Messiah and deliverer in whom men were to receive the remission of sins and inheritance in the kingdom of the saints. The mission of John, to whom this very truth of the Saviour's sufferings had been manifest before the consummation of Calvary,¹ is recalled by the phrase, "doing works worthy of repentance." "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," is the testimony of St. Paul no less than of the Baptist. This surely is what is meant by the few sentences in which his primary witness at Damascus is summed up. "Straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus," the crucified Nazarene whom he had persecuted, "that He is the Son of God."² By "the Son of God" is meant here the Christ, the Messiah. For it was this which to the amazement of the Jews he proceeded to prove, no doubt after the same manner in which the first Pentecostal preaching had woven together such prophecies of the Messiah as the second Psalm with those which depict Jehovah's Servant. And the report of St. Paul's sermon

¹ John i. 29.

² Acts ix. 20.

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at Pisidian Antioch so combines the note of the original proclamation of the Gospel with the phraseology of the Pauline epistles, as to reveal the theology of the latter as the development of the former, and to leave no doubt that justification in St. Paul's scheme is equivalent to the forgiveness of sins. "Through this man," cries the apostle, "is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."¹

Here, then, we have justification brought into relation with the sovereign, all-embracing message of salvation. To accept that message is to become a Christian, so that we may say at once, what the proportions of the Pauline theology abundantly prove, that justification is no mere preliminary act in the progression "justified, sanctified, glorified," but that it covers the whole career of the Christian as the essential condition. "Justification of life" is that to which he is admitted through faith in Jesus.² It is the state which begins and ends in forgiveness. The member of Christ's body is before all else a justified, a redeemed, a forgiven man. And the marrow

¹ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

² Rom. v. 18.

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of the Pauline divinity is nothing else but what Luther expressed in those startling paradoxes which are continually preventing men from acknowledging that he pierced to the very centre of the apostle's thought. That the whole structure rests upon the death of Christ is luminously clear from the repeated assertions of the epistles themselves. To the Galatians Christ had been "openly set forth" as crucified.¹ This was the bed-rock of teaching. Among the Corinthians the apostle had determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The exact terms of the inviolable Gospel are given in precise language, which shows the same appeal to the Old Testament as is manifest in Acts. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and . . . rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."² The Epistle to the Romans makes it clear that sins here means past acts of transgression. "He was delivered," says the apostle, "for our trespasses."³ And the significance of the Resurrection appears in the words that immediately follow: "and was raised for our justification." Justification, then, is related to offences, as the act whereby God

¹ Gal. iii. 1.

² 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

³ Rom. iv. 25.

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declares an amnesty in respect of them. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That is the be-all and the end-all of salvation, following no less than preceding sanctification, because it stands for the covering relations with God, which alone make holiness possible. We must be free in respect of the law which condemns before we can be subject to the law of the Spirit which gives life. It is a fundamental misconception of Pauline theology to assert that final acquittal can only take place on the basis of a realised holiness. On the contrary, sanctification is part of the glory, which shall only be fully realised with the redemption of the body. It is part of the gift of God, the inheritance of the saints in light, an anticipation of that body which shall be, an earnest, a first-fruits of the Spirit. Any other teaching, as the Reformers of the sixteenth century clearly perceived, leads us back by a circuitous route to the bondage of dead works, and that in the more deceptive form of those "voluntary-works" which were roundly denounced by Hugh Latimer.¹

It has almost come to be a commonplace

¹ See, *e.g.*, his second sermon on the Card.

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of current theology, and that even where there is no suggestion of modernity, that in the New Testament there is "no shadow of a doctrine of imputed righteousness." Now, however, we are to reconcile it with our ethical conceptions, it is surely just imputed righteousness which is the keynote of St. Paul's theory of justification. We must first state the apostle's teaching in his own language, and then proceed to inquire how it becomes possible that a mind so essentially ethical as St. Paul's was satisfied by it. "Impute" is, of course, only the Latin word for "count" or "reckon." It is argued that the Epistle to the Romans declares that faith is reckoned instead of righteousness; that in the surrender of the believer, God is able to see the promise of righteousness not yet realised but fraught with the possibilities of a "final reconciliation" on "the basis of likeness of character." That God looks at us not as we are but as we are tending to become is a formula which, while it throws a man back upon himself, only obscures the fulness of St. Paul's meaning. His argument is perfectly clear. If in one place he says of the believer that "his faith is reckoned for righteousness," he interprets his meaning a little

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lower down, when he speaks of Abraham's faith as reckoned for righteousness before he was circumcised, in order that "righteousness might be reckoned" to the Gentiles. This is to declare in plainest terms that justification by faith involves "reckoned" or "imputed" righteousness. This is what he calls "the righteousness of faith." The transformation of character through the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ he describes quite differently as sanctification or holiness. When, therefore, in the Epistle to the Philippians he tells of his desire to be found at the last in Christ, "not having a righteousness of mine own, *even* that which is of the law, but . . . the righteousness which is of God by faith,"¹ he means the righteousness, the obedience, the sacrifice for sin consummated on the Cross by Jesus Christ put in the place of his own breaches of the law, his own want of attainment, the handwriting of ordinances which he, the chief of sinners, knows by the testimony of his own conscience will rise up against him at the Last Day.

This will become still plainer if we attentively consider the proportions of his argument. Every man has a past. That, as we

¹ iii. 9.

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have seen, is the basis of salvation. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven."¹ This is the situation which faces all mankind. But in Christ "a righteousness of God hath been manifested."² Observe the parallel. God meets His own manifested wrath by His own manifested righteousness. No doubt the fruit of righteousness is holiness, just as moral degradation results when God gives men up to vile passions. But the real moral problem is not to cut off the entail of sin but to do that which Aristotle declared impossible, to change the past, to cancel the debt which the attempt to do the works of the law only reveals as daily accumulating.

Justice is rarely done to a passage in which St. Paul concentrates his whole thought about the Atonement.

"All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith, by His blood, to shew His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the shewing, I say, of His righteousness at this present season:

¹ Rom. i. 18.

² Ib. i. 17.

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that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.”¹

There can be no surer indication of the supremely ethical quality of St. Paul's mind than these words. At all costs God must be just. To the character of God as revealed in the moral law this Hebrew of the Hebrews clung with passionate tenacity. And yet there was another revelation of His Name to which the experience of the history of Israel bore an equal testimony. Like a father He pitied His children in the infinitude of His loving-kindness, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, stretching forth hands of forbearance and mercy to a rebellious and gainsaying people, proclaiming by the mouth of His prophets, “Blessed is the man whose unrighteousness is forgiven and whose sin is covered.” How were these opposing views to be reconciled? Could God be alike just and the justifier? The idea of “le bon Dieu” was impossible to the sons of Abraham. The “Eternal who loveth righteousness” could “by no means clear the guilty.” Now and then one would ascend the mount of vision, and, desiring a great unrealised idea looming through the mist, proclaim to his fellows

¹ Rom. iii. 23-26.

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the advent of a Righteous Sufferer wounded for the transgressions of His people. And the rest, knowing that no man can redeem his brother nor even give his first-born for the sin of his own soul, would murmur some words about the purificatory influences of penitence and pain, and with the heroic pride of the Hebrew grimly return to the thankless task of tithing the anise and the cummin, and trying to do their duty. That was the attitude of Saul the Pharisee before he saw the Lord. The new fact at once bridged the chasm which else would separate the justice from the love of God, and leave to us poor mortals the choice between a stern Judge and a benevolent Despot, or at any rate shut us up to the vague hope that "somehow good shall be the final goal of ill." Christ—crucified, risen, ascended, returning—is the revelation of God's righteousness. In Him sin is condemned, the debt paid. In Him sin is forgiven, man reconciled. "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

No doubt it is true that repentance is in itself an eloquent witness to the forgiveness of sins; that the experience of life with its conversions, sometimes unconnected not only

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with any realisation of the death of Christ but even of religion itself, testifies to the redeeming love of God. But it is just the manly sense of responsibility, the knowledge that the consequences of past sins are so far beyond recall as to leave no place of repentance though the blessing of their reversal be sought carefully with tears, that demands payment of the debt. No man, who is really seeking salvation, wishes to be "let off." The puny soul who, content to continue in sin that grace may abound, would creep into the Kingdom of Heaven by the back door of an immoral substitution, must be thrown back upon the first principles of natural religion with the "God forbid" of a righteous ethical indignation. Let him master the first part of Butler's Analogy before he begins the second. St. Paul is exactly the man who would have met death in the spirit of Browning's "Prospice"—

"No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold."

If it is conscience that drives men to the foot of the Cross, that means that we must

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think of the best, the most ethically developed man, when we are dealing with the Pauline, the Biblical theology of salvation. We must not for a moment suppose that St. Paul was self-satisfied, in the sense of failing to realise the need of forgiveness. Like all good men, he desired to be "heard, forgiven, punished." That was precisely the Hebrew idea. Have I ruined my health? Then I will accept disease as God's chastisement. Have I dissipated my fortune? Then in my poverty I will serve God. Have I sinned? I will bear the indignation of the Lord, and by dying pay my debt. That is the last word of Judaism. Death is life's quittance, wherein the man is justified.

But for St. Paul the essence of the Gospel consists in this, that God freely justifies the ungodly; in other words He, like the king in the parable, "being moved with compassion released him, and forgave him the debt." It would be playing with words to say that this was not equivalent to the remission of punishment. For, though punishment as we experience it involves elements that are exemplary, remedial, disciplinary, essentially it is penalty, satisfaction, atonement. Because the *lex talionis*, as exacted by man from man, is now rejected as primitive and barbarous, it does

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not cease to be true that "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." It was only the other day, in view of a shocking crime, the perpetrator of which still cheats the gallows, that newspapers commented on the fact that we can no longer reckon on the murderer's conscience, which Dickens, for example, used in his story of Bill Sikes or Jonas Chuzzlewit. Is it quite certain that we are not being called upon to pay even in our social life for the disappearance of that stern view of the universal order which held that God at least requires "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"? "Heard, forgiven, punished"—yes, so long as the debt is one that man can discharge, let him repent and bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. "Heard, forgiven, released"—that alone must be the progression when the debt is ten thousand talents, when sins more in number than the hairs of the head have already irrevocably impaired that sacrifice of a perfect righteousness with which alone God is well pleased. What, then, we see in the risen Christ is that God can remit to us the debt of sin because it has been duly paid by another. The punishment of sins already committed has been indeed vicariously borne, and we are set free for that life of holiness in

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the kingdom of God which is our being's end and aim.

This doctrine of substitution, for it is nothing short of that, depends entirely upon the fact that Jesus in the sense of the historic creeds is the Son of God. None is concerned to deny that to punish one human being for the transgressions of another is worse than devoid of moral value. But we can at least see, however little we can understand, that if, in order to forgive, God spared not His own Son, there is some guarantee for the justice of Him who made this infinite surrender. And the representative character of the humanity in which Christ suffered, which St. Paul expresses in his twice repeated analogue of the Second Adam,¹ enables us to penetrate some short distance into the mystery of redeeming love.

But it is just at this point that the apostle seems to feel that another range of ideas must be introduced if adequate expression is to be given to the atoning, the reconciling work of Christ. The ideas are those of ritual and sacrifice. The showing of God's righteousness is the setting forth of Jesus as a propitiation. Here St. Paul shows his affinity

¹ Rom. v. 12-20; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45.

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alike with the Evangelical Prophet of the Old Testament and with St. John and the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New. There is no doubt about the word (*ἱλαστήριον*). It means an offering that makes the face of God propitious. "He is the propitiation (*ἱλασμός*) for our sins," wrote St. John.¹ "Behold the Lamb of God," is the witness of the Baptist in the fourth Gospel. When St. Paul declares that as an offering for sin Christ condemned sin, he is in accord with the passage in Hebrews which speaks of Him as having appeared once in the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. There is nothing more significant than the way in which the sacred writers fall instinctively into the language of sacrifice, which is connected with one of the most fundamental instincts of the human race, when they endeavour to describe the mystery of Christ's satisfaction for the sins of the world. It is as though the terms of what we may call the ethics of the market-place were wholly insufficient to cover the great transaction whereby God and sinners are reconciled. "Self-sacrifice" is the renaming of an old virtue in view of that "sacrifice

¹ 1 Ep. ii. 2.

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of Himself," by God's eternal Priest, to which all the associations of ritual offering still adhere. To translate "the one oblation of Himself once offered" into the "self-sacrifice of Christ" is to reverse the process; to reduce Christ's unique work of atonement to the level of ordinary self-surrender rather than to touch that virtue with the reflected glory of Calvary. As represented in the New Testament, the work of redemption belongs to what we have ventured to call the "metethical" plane. It is essentially a mystery, and it is here that reticence on the subject of the atonement begins. "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation" — there St. Paul is content to leave it. There must of necessity be an element of symbol in the representation of a truth which concerns the relations not of man with man, but of man with God. We leave the forum and enter the temple. The circle of ideas is not that of social service but of divine worship. The great secret which lay behind the blind, dumb approaches of men to the veiled Presence, when they gave their first-born for their transgression, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls, was at length laid bare when in the Offering of the Cross they be-

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held the Lamb which God Himself provided, a death which was no longer the penalty but the sacrifice for sins. It is not to an obvious and surface morality but to the truths which "in manhood darkly join," that the Crucifix makes an appeal that will never lose its power. "For His sake" is, after all, a more powerful, because a more personal, motive for morality than "through Christ." "I forgave thee all that debt . . . shouldest not thou also have compassion on thy fellow servant?" The worship of the Church is eucharistic, a crowding of God's courts with thankful praise, the pleading of a merit not our own.

There is no testimony which men are slower to believe than that which affirms not only that this joy is attainable, but that on this alone the characteristically Christian life is built. Mr. Quiller Couch, in his "Hetty Wesley," shows us how half the tragedy of that broken life lay in failure to realise the mighty truth that was about to manifest itself as the one and only secret of the power of the Methodist revival. "She remembered Mary Magdalene," so he writes, "whom Christ had forgiven, and caught at a hope for herself. But why had Christ forgiven Mary? Because she had been sorry,

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and turned and walked the rest of her life in goodness. Because *she had foreseen her long atonement.*¹ So Hetty believed. For her, too, then, the way back to forgiveness lay through conduct—always through conduct; and for her the road stretched long, for *not until death could she reach assurance.*¹ Of a way to forgiveness through faith (though she must have heard of it a hundred times) she scarce thought; still less of a way through faith to instant assurance. To those who have not travelled by that road, its end—though promised on the honour of God and proclaimed incessantly by those who have travelled and found it—seems merely incredible.”

But it is the incredible that is true. So trammelled are we by the meshes of a pettifogging morality that we cannot set our feet in that large room, where God, who sends rain on just and unjust, out of the boundless stores of His immense liberality freely forgives them both. And may it not be that in dealing with our brother men a similar failure to realise the love of God prevents us from escaping out of the narrow legalism of Charity Organisation into the broad fields of the Social Gospel?

¹ The italics are mine.

IV

COMMON GUILT AND CORPORATE FORGIVENESS

THERE is a corporate element in the divine forgiveness. What at first sight seems to be a simple readjustment of the relations between the soul and its Maker is seen on further reflection to be a much more complex experience than at once appears. The second article of the English Church declares that the death of Christ is "a sacrifice not only for all actual sins of men" but also "for original guilt," and it is the latter which stands first. Whatever we are to understand by the phrase "original sin," the substitution in this place of the word "guilt" for the more usual "sin" emphasises the fact that Christ's relation to sin in its social aspect is precisely the same as in its individual manifestations. In either case it is remission of pain or guilt. In other words, to say that by the offering of Himself Christ takes away the sin of the

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world is to apply to mankind, that is to human society, the same ideas by which in the last chapter we endeavoured to interpret in regard to the individual the primary conception of the Gospel, that Christ "died for our sins and rose again for our justification." It is undoubtedly the teaching of Scripture that the remission of sins is in the first instance applied to a redeemed society. This is involved in the sacrament of Baptism, which initiates to a society, and which is coupled with the proclamation of the Gospel in the apostolic commission. "Repent and be baptized," says St. Peter, "unto the remission of sins." "And now why tarriest thou?" is the question of Ananias to the converted Saul: "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Such language, which clearly does not interfere with the immediate experience of forgiveness on the part of the believer, nor involve the interposition of official mediators between the soul and the Saviour, is in reality a fuller interpretation of a relationship which, though in the first joy of realisation it may seem to exclude all but the two luminously self-evident personalities therein trusted, is nevertheless only effected in the Kingdom. And St. Paul, who in the hour of his conver-

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sion received his call to the apostleship of the Gentiles, knows that redemption is no series of isolated and independent dealings with individual souls, but that we are reconciled "in one body" to the Father. Observe what this teaching of the Epistle to the Ephesians is. It does not assert that God proceeds to unite in one body those whom He reconciles to Himself. He declares that there can be no such experience as the forgiveness of sins without involving the body. The social organism, to use the modern phrase, is implicated in each man's redemption. No man can have any part in the free favour of God through Christ, if there is no antecedent society or flock which He purchased with His blood. It is not even true to say that, while pardon is offered to each personally, the means of spiritual production or sanctification are the joint capital of a community. For not only is the "process of sanctification" an imperfect, if not a misleading, figure by which to express what is as much a direct personal act of God as our justification, but both are placed on precisely the same footing by the New Testament. "But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus

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Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”¹ Forgiveness, then, is corporate.

But this is the rock on which, as we are told, the modern mind is bound to split. Original sin, which in some shape or another is necessarily implied in the idea that there is a corporate need of pardon, is said to be an antiquated form of thought, for which the ecclesiastic feels himself bound to contend in the interests of traditional orthodoxy, but which, if it is not positively at variance with the teaching of science, is nevertheless a wholly gratuitous assumption, for which the average layman, concerned with practical affairs, has consequently no use.

Now the first thing which the professional theologian has to do is to be absolutely fair, so far as he knows how, to the lay mind. What exactly does the intelligent man think and say? In the first place it would not be true to say that the cultured mind of to-day, even where it is unmistakably free from religious bias, never uses language that implies some kinship with theological ideas. Lord Morley of Blackburn, for example, in his introduction to the *Miscellanies of Emerson*, criticises the American philosopher on the ground that he

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

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takes no account of "that horrid burden and impediment on the soul, which the churches call sin, and which, by whatever name we call it, is a very real catastrophe in the moral nature of man."¹ How far the author of these words would allow us to press their meaning I do not know. But, speaking generally, it would be true to say that what the average man, who professes to follow the methods of thought current in the twentieth century, is inclined to reject is any theory of human nature conflicting with that idea of the ascent of man which, rightly or wrongly, he supposes to follow from the doctrine of evolution. This does not necessarily involve indifference to the wrongs of our common life or the sins of society. Adherents of the new theology are, many of them, protagonists in the battle against iniquity, and will sorrowfully confess their own failures in duty and wilful deflection from the paths of righteousness. In the minds of many the conception of sin appears but as a palliation of offences. And there are probably thousands who would be ready to exclaim with the author of the *Miserere*, "I acknowledge my faults," yet who would renounce, as a sacerdotal fantasy, the

¹ P. lvi.

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idea contained in the words that follow: "Behold I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me." Such a statement, they would urge, has no equivalent in experience. It would be a libel on multitudes of honest men to say that they had abandoned conscience. Conscience, they would declare, does indeed tell me that "I am a man of unclean lips," but it does not allow me to add, except as a purely empirical statement, that "I dwell among a people of unclean lips."

Now, before we proceed further, it must be clearly understood that we are dealing with the Biblical idea of corporate sin, not with the ecclesiastical phrase by which theologians have sought to represent it. The phrase "original sin" comes to us coloured with the imperfect thinking of centuries, and is not itself scriptural. We must not, therefore, be its slaves, but its masters. Physical analogy is far more prominent in the pages of ecclesiastical writers than in those of the New Testament. None of the words for sin, for example, are metaphors taken from disease, and it is the devout imagination, not the sacred narrative, which speaks of Christ as the Good Physician. Such figures, no doubt, have their

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uses. "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint," cried the prophet. And many a stricken soul has found peace in the thought of "that wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin." But the attempt to discover natural law in the spiritual world has never been unattended with grave dangers. And habitually to think and speak of sin in terms of disease is to follow many false tracks and to develop many questionable theories. Whether with the Anglican reformers we speak of "the fault (*vitium*) and depravity of nature," or with Browning in "Gold Hair" of "the corruption of man's heart," we are using language which is unobjectionable as metaphor, but which may easily cover notions of heredity as dubious as they are materialistic. With regard to the English Articles it must be remembered that the language of the ninth is balanced by that of the second, and that the phrase "original guilt," to which reference has already been made, much more nearly represents the dominant idea of the New Testament.

A second point to remember is that the Bible must in this connection, as in every other, be interpreted historically. We must bear in mind that our own habitual methods

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of thought are in many instances derived from sources very different from those out of which flowed the ideas which ran in Hebrew channels. When, for example, St. Paul speaks of "Adam's transgression," we have no right, in the spirit of a narrow western literalism, to assert that this binds us to accept the occurrence of a primitive act of disobedience within the limits of history as the origin and fountain-head of sin. We must ascertain what is the exchange value of the forms in which St. Paul's teaching finds expression—what, in other words, is their equivalent in other circles of thought. This we can only do when we have at least attempted to realise the prevailing habits of the Hebrew mind. But of this there will be more to say at a later stage.

The idea of corporate forgiveness is one which might on the face of it have been expected to commend itself to a generation of which social consciousness is a well-marked, if not exaggerated, characteristic. Socialism in politics is now basing itself on a theory of society which regards the individuals, though possessed of a self-conscious personality that makes them from one point of view their own end, as contributory to a larger unity,

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like the germ cells in a physical organism.¹ The radicalism of the Manchester school proclaimed the enfranchisement of the individual. Now we are told that, inasmuch as personal life can only attain its true development in society, to which at every stage it is relative, further progress is only possible along the line of the welfare of the community, and legislation must henceforth be regulated by the conception not of political liberty but of social service. Behind the liberties of the individual rise the liberty or unimpeded development of the social organism. The notion which underlies this theory is as old as human thought. Among the Greeks, for example, it expressed itself characteristically in terms of the City State. Thus the Republic of Plato is really a treatise on ethics, because for him the city is the individual writ large, while the ethics and politics of Aristotle are in due sequence one with the other. Modern political philosophy takes a wider range, and speaks of society in terms so general that it becomes coextensive with the human race. In practice, however, the outlook is narrowed, if not to the municipality, at any rate to

¹ Reference may be made, for example, to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's *Socialism and Society*.

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the nation, which, unless imperialism is successful among the British people in converting a loose federation into a new political unity, is likely to continue as the normal unit of government. But the point is that social consciousness is a prominent feature in the life and thought of the present day. Now what the doctrine of original sin implies is that behind the need of the individual rises the Need of the Race, behind the sins of the man looms the Sin of the Race, behind the reconciliation of the believer appears the Reconciliation of the Body. This should at least make us pause before we dismiss this teaching as inconsistent with modern enlightenment. If the principle that "we are members one of another," which St. Paul sets before us as the highest motive to social duty in the Body of Christ, is seen to enter into the very core and marrow of the Gospel, when it proclaims a redemption applying no less to the community than to the individuals who compose it, and only to the latter in virtue of their membership in the former, it becomes us to inquire whether, after all, it is the doctrine that is at fault, and not rather the imperfect forms under which we are accustomed to represent it.

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We speak of society as though it were not a mere abstraction, and there is a growing conviction, of which political socialism is by no means the only active expression, that the term represents a reality. There is a sense in which we are all socialists now, and many, who would hesitate to accept the socialistic programme as a remedy for economic ills, would yet be ready to agree with Mr. Ramsay Macdonald that "the development of the organs and functions of mutual aid" must be the watchword of a community whose ideal is social service.¹ But, when we come to ask for a definite picture of that society, on the development of which our aspirations are set, there is nothing which more effectually eludes and baffles our imagination. What is society? What do we mean by the race as distinct from the individuals which compose it? The difficulty with which this question confronts us is precisely the same as that which meets us in realising the Biblical doctrine of corporate sin. The imperfect and misleading ideas of the meaning of solidarity are parallel to the conception of original sin which popular theology too often substitutes for the teaching of the New Testament. And

¹ Socialism and Society, p. 130.

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it is when we appreciate the true character of the phenomena in which society manifests itself that sin as distinguished from sins becomes a necessary presupposition of a Christianity that is in full accord with the facts of human life and experience.

The conception of solidarity is, I suppose, connected in the large majority of minds with that enlarged view of mutual dependence that comes to us from biological science. It is based upon physical analogy, it tends to express itself in terms of the material life, and with this consequence, that our thoughts concerning it take an impersonal form. They take shape, for example, in ideas of heredity; of some sort of human seed, or stuff, or stock that is transmitted through the channel of individual lives and reappears from generation to generation. We speak of atavism, of tendencies, of reversion to type. The procession of the centuries comes to be regarded rather as a complexity of causes and effects than as the emergence of personalities. Not only does the individual wither, while the world is more and more; but we approach every question in the spirit of a cold analysis which explains actions by antecedents, and breaks up moral responsibility into constituents which can

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hardly claim the full title of ethical. The process, in a word, is one of depersonalisation. I am not discussing the question whether this is a result which ought properly to follow from a biological view of human history. But it is surely true that it is a result which as a matter of fact does follow. Men come to regard their sense of personal identity almost as though it were an illusion, and their puny acts of self-assertion almost as a ridiculous defiance of the inexorable processes of nature, which fulfil themselves in the very protests that are hurled against them. But conscience will not stand analysis, nor personality a non-personal explanation. And Society does, in fact, as we shall see presently, mean infinitely more than an impersonal nexus of individual personalities for all who acknowledge its sovereignty in the realm of practical activity.

The next point to notice is that some such process of thought as I have attempted to describe has long been at work in the theological sphere with reference to the doctrine of original sin. That such a doctrine is contained in the Scriptures, that it is integral to the presentation of the Gospel

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as therein set forth, we should have said, but for Pelagius, that nothing but modern ingenuity could deny or ignore. Speaking generally, it has been so acknowledged. But so difficult has any notion of sin in the full ethical sense, involving as it does guilt and responsibility, appeared not only to the popular, but also to the theological mind, if it is to be understood as attaching to mankind as distinct from individual men, that a doctrine of original sin has been quietly interpreted as a doctrine of the origin of sin. It has been assumed that it is put forward in Scripture as an explanation of the fact of experience that there is none righteous. Thus it is variously interpreted as an incurable bias of the will towards evil, as a corruption of the nature inherited by each individual together with his bodily and mental organisation, as a disease of the spirit transmitted from father to son, as a bad heredity. Such language is open to many objections. Not that we are wrong in speaking of sin as corruption or disease, so long as we remember that we are using physical analogies; but we clearly go beyond both Scripture and experience if we attempt a theory of transmission or pro-

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pagation. And to treat any of these descriptive metaphors as though it were a definition is to make sin non-moral and impersonal. It is impossible to represent this alleged racial defect otherwise than as a palliation of transgressions, a mitigation of responsibility, something that might rightly move the Divine pity, but could not justly incur the Divine wrath. I remember listening to a clergyman who was bringing home to a congregation of children, as it seemed to me with considerable effect, the meaning of their sins as acts of disobedience and disloyalty to the heavenly Father. All went well until, perhaps stimulated by the presence of a stray clergyman among his youthful audience, he suddenly seemed to find it necessary to burn a little incense to orthodoxy. "Of course," he interjected, "I do not forget original sin, that bias of the will towards evil which each one of us inherits." I could not help feeling at the time that, if the children understood what he was saying, which probably they did not, the only impression which these words would convey was that perhaps, after all, they were not so much to blame, as conscience might suggest, for angry words or naughty passions. The

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catechist had been carefully filling his bucket only to kick it over at the end. There is no such palliation in the New Testament. Sin in its broadest and most comprehensive sense is inexcusable, incurs the wrath of God, entails guilt and punishment, and therefore, whether original or actual, is equally ethical, equally personal. There is no warrant in Scripture for regarding it under any circumstances as a pathological condition. On the contrary, St. Paul argues that transgression is made possible by the publication of the moral law in order that sin might appear in its true colours as personal disobedience to the righteous will of a personal God.

There is therefore nothing in the Biblical doctrine of sin which makes it an antecedent condition of individual responsibility. It is a failure of thought which introduces between the transgression of an original individual, who became the father of the human race, and the transgressions of all the other individuals, who are the descendants of that ancestor, a *tertium quid* which can only be materialistically represented as a taint, and which has nothing corresponding to it either in the Old Testament or the New. An im-

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personal condition which is the result of one act and the cause of others is not itself an act, and cannot therefore be legitimately called sin. And, what is more, it robs those acts that are dependent upon it of a portion of their spontaneity, and therefore of their full right to be regarded as sins. Christian theology has always employed terms in speaking of this condition which so far save the situation by refusing to regard "original sin" as a mitigation of personal guilt. But there can be no doubt that in practice it has almost invariably been the seminal idea that has been developed by way of explaining the fact that all men are sinners on lines borrowed from the common inheritance of flesh and blood. Thus we get the conception of the sinfulness of all men as something different from their accumulated sins. I may in passing observe that this phase of thought corresponds to the theory of grace which is too common among religious teachers, when it is presented as some sort of impersonal influence conducted, as it were, through the channels of the sacraments from the reservoir of Christ's obedience, so as to create the obedience of the members of His Body.

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It is this type of thinking which affords some justification for the claim advanced by some writers for a restatement of the doctrine of sin in terms of modern thought. But this is not really the work that requires doing. What we want to do is to restate the Christian doctrine in terms of the New Testament, carefully avoiding ideas which have been introduced by way of explaining the statements of Scripture, but which are not necessarily involved in those statements, and may tend to confuse rather than to elucidate. We shall then be able to see whether the discrepancy between the Christian teaching concerning sin and the lessons of scientific psychology are so divergent as is supposed. Dr. Tennant, in his Hulsean Lectures on "The Origin and Propagation of Sin," affords a conspicuous instance of the disasters which are not unlikely to attend the process of attempting to mend a traditional orthodoxy by comparison with scientific doctrine without going first to the sources of Christianity. For the theory of sin with which he has succeeded in presenting us contradicts the fundamental ideas of Scripture, and bears no relation to the corporate character of Christ's redeeming work. It is

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quite true that "the existence of sin is the sufficient basis of the doctrines of grace and redemption, quite apart from the further question of sin's origin and mode of propagation."¹ But the real question is, What is sin? Does it exist in the will of the individual alone? Or does it attach also to the race? May it be predicated of man as well as men? We may doubt the occurrence of an event in history to which sin may be traced, without denying that Divine pardon is corporate as well as personal, and that to be reconciled in one body by the Cross involves the existence of what can only be called common guilt. But it is this which Dr. Tennant's theory denies. "Guilt," he says, "attaches with propriety only to the individual person."² Or again, "The doctrine of original sin, in so far as it implies original guilt, stands self-condemned."³ If it be true, as this writer further asserts, that modern theology tends to retain original sin, while it repudiates original guilt, then so much the worse for modern theology, which, in so far as it does this, is a departure from the teaching of Scripture. The view, however,

¹ F. R. Tennant, *Hulsean Lectures*, p. 13.

² *Ib.*, p. 15.

³ *Ib.*, p. 20.

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which Dr. Tennant himself advances as the only possible account of what has hitherto been reckoned as original sin, identifies this factor in man's disobedience with the environment of our common humanity under which disobedience becomes possible. As this is a condition of the life of men for which they are not responsible, it ought to be obvious that there is nothing to distinguish this theory from the Pelagianism condemned in the ninth article of the Church of England. For the Welsh monk Morgan, from whose Latin name this teaching receives its appellation, never denied (as who could?) that our environment is a source of temptation. What he did deny, and what Scripture asserts, is that Christ died for the race, and for the individual as a member of the race; in other words, that sin can be predicated, prior to experience, of all men, on the simple ground that they are men. This is implied not only in the universality of the Gospel message but in the very conditions under which atonement is effected. "We have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."¹ "We both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father."²

¹ Heb. x. 10.

² Eph. ii. 18.

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"We were baptized into his death."¹ Salvation is corporate because sin is common.

Mention has been made of the theory of corporate personality as seeming to be involved in a good deal of modern political theory. To those who approach the facts of life from an idealistic standpoint the conception will of course be familiar. The Hebrews, however, as Dr. A. B. Davidson has insisted, were not philosophers but prophets. For them fact and faith were closely united, and they approached life from the side of experience. And the study of the Old Testament reveals the presence of this sense of corporate personality, not as a philosophical postulate of experience, but as the characteristic expression of that race consciousness which is at least as fundamental to human nature as the realisation of individual identity.²

¹ Rom. vi. 3.

² Attention may also be drawn to a paper by Dr. Jevons of Durham in the Pan-anglican series (B. I. 2) on "The Evolution of the Religious Consciousness." The writer begins by quoting a striking parallel to the Psalms of David in a prayer for forgiveness taken from the Babylonian Penitential Psalms. When the suppliant cries, "My God, forgive my iniquities," we seem to witness an intense realisation of personal guilt in presence of an absolute Person. It is, however, pointed out that the Babylonians were a polytheistic

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The idea of a solidarity in guilt is vividly, if crudely, expressed in the Second Commandment, where a jealous God is described as "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." That the statement is crude is witnessed by the fact that it did not escape criticism even within the system of which it is a conspicuous principle. Ezekiel's strong statement of individual responsibility, "the soul that sinneth it shall die,"¹ starts from a Hebrew proverb based on the rule that the son shall bear the iniquity of the father. The point of the criticism is, of course, to show that the principle must not be enunciated as a mitigation of personal guilt. A

people. The utterance is not that of a theist, but of one who addresses his ancestral deity, "just as the Israelite, at one period of his history, prayed to Jehovah, without doubting the existence of the gods worshipped by other peoples." For those, on whose lips the words are placed, "religion is not an individual affair, it is part of the common consciousness of a community." In religion and the things that look towards God human thought was communal before it was individual. When, therefore, a primitive Semite spoke of "my sin" he not only included his race but spoke as a member of his race. These are the lines of study which will lead to a truer conception of original sin than can be gained either by comparisons with scientific theory or considerations drawn from general philosophy.

¹ Ezek. xviii. 4.

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man may not cry, "In sin hath my mother conceived me" before he has declared, "I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me."¹ There can, however, be no doubt, from the very form of the paradox, that the only two ideas involved are guilt and punishment. It is the fathers that eat the sour grapes, the children's teeth that are set on edge. It is the fathers who sin, the children upon whom the consequences of those sins are visited. The moral difficulty is simply that of vicarious punishment. To introduce the thought of inherited tendencies, vitiated appetites, depraved wills, would be to blunt the edge of the problem. Its solution, so far as it is one, is to be found along the lines of that identification of the individual with the race which is a first principle of Hebrew thought. Jacob is sometimes the ancestor,² at others the embodiment of the Hebrew race.³ Now it is the promise made to Abraham that is the reason of God's love for Israel,⁴ now the affection which He bears to Israel itself.⁵ The most personal and intimate passages in the Psalms must never be so interpreted as not to be

¹ Ps. li. 3, 5.

² *e.g.* Mic. vii. 20.

³ *e.g.* Isa. xli. 8.

⁴ Ps. cv. 42.

⁵ *e.g.* Ps. xlvii. 4.

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capable of representing the experiences of the nation. "When Israel was a child," says Jehovah in Hosea, "then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."¹ "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, my way is hid from the Lord?"² is the question addressed to the people in the Evangelical Prophet. The spiritual Israel is the Man of Sorrows. The Messiah was to recapitulate (this became a fixed principle of interpretation) the whole history of the chosen race in his own person.³ Perhaps some insight into the sort of method by which this idea was presented to the mind may be gained from the reason given by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews for his statement that Levi paid tithes in Abraham. "For Levi," he says, "was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedek met him."⁴ It would not be at all in accordance with the Hebrew mind to press this language into a hard, literal theory that the son is actually in the father, so that the rewards or punishments due to the one may appropriately be paid to the other. But it does illustrate the vivid realisation of race as something more

¹ xi. 1.

² Isa. xl. 27.

³ See Edersheim, *Life and Times*, Bk. ii. c. 5.

⁴ Heb. vii. 10.

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than the mere environment of the individual, as an existence even more personal than the individuals that compose it. When a prophet says that Israel sins, that Ephraim is judged, that Judah is punished, he means not only that there are sinners in the nation who suffer for their transgressions. He means what we all mean when we become convinced, not as the conclusion of a philosophic theory, but as the result of experience, that there is a great life, a large society, working out its own rational existence in and through the lesser lives, the smaller units, of which it is something more than the mere aggregate.

This social personality, if the idea may be so expressed, and its activities are summed up, as it were, in the experience of the ancestral founder of the tribe. "Thy first father sinned."¹ The obvious likeness between the members of a family is in itself sufficient to suggest that the group is in fact a unity which exemplifies itself in each member, and of which the father is the appropriate representative. "Thy father was a Hittite and thy mother was an Amorite,"² is to the prophet Ezekiel a sufficient explanation of

¹ Isa. xliii. 27.

² xvi. 45.

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the idolatries of Judah. There is no theory of transmission here, but simply of unity. When, therefore, the son is regarded as bearing the iniquity of the father—when, that is, the penal consequences of the father's sin are undergone by the son—it is recognised that this is not one individual sinning and another suffering, but a crude representation of solidarity. No doubt Edersheim is right when he says that the rabbis had no doctrine of original sin in the sense of a theory either of inherited guilt or transmitted tendency.¹ But many of them did hold, as this same writer admits, that death was the punishment of Adam's transgression, and that in this sense the race bears the consequences of the first sin. But just as when St. Peter says that Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree, it is no adequate explanation, in view of the fifty-third of Isaiah and its intimate connection with the sacrificial system, to hold that Christ bore the consequences of sin without an entire identification with it: so it does not exhaust the Hebrew view, not indeed of the origin, but of the universal character of sin, to stop short of St. Paul's doctrine of the

¹ Life and Times, Bk. ii. c. 5.

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first Adam which is its final expression. Not, of course, that we find the explicit statement of this teaching. It is not the function of the Old Testament to give us theories, but to exhibit ideas in the various stages of growth. The rabbis, however, do speak of each man being the Adam of his own soul,¹ as though they regarded the race story as recapitulating itself in the experience of the individual. And this is, after all, only the extension of the conception involved in the personalisation of Israel to the wider sphere of humanity. What we may rightly maintain is that the Old Testament exhibits the idea of corporate guilt in process of development.

One or two considerations will serve to make it plain that the notion of a tainted stock is really an unwarranted addition alike to the Old and the New Testament conception of sin. In the first place, the idea of status is much more prominent than that of blood in the Hebrew conception of race. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," the son of the promise.² Jacob, the younger, inherits the blessing. Ishmael and Edom, though both

¹ See Sanday and Headlam's *Romans*, "The Effects of Adam's Fall in Jewish Theology," pp. 135-137.

² Gen. xxi. 12.

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descended from Abraham, are outside the covenant. St. Paul is only following a genuine Hebrew method when he identifies believers with the children of Abraham. The Messiah, moreover, is appointed "heir of all things,"¹ His physical descent being of secondary importance. "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth."² Then, secondly, we must insist on the fact that it is not the sinfulness of Adam that infects his descendants but his disobedience that constitutes them sinners. In other words, when the unity of the race in respect of sin is stated under the form of inheritance, it is a sin entailing consequences, not a sinfulness propagating itself, which is asserted. Adam's transgression is the archetypal, the representative sin, and there is absolutely nothing in the Epistle to the Romans or elsewhere in Scripture to suggest that this offence was the cause of an infection. The Bible never uses Sin otherwise than as a general word for sins, just as Man expresses the sum total of men; with, however, this difference in either case, that Man is really human society under a personal aspect, while Sin is the guilt and disobedience of society. "All have sinned" would suffi-

¹ Heb. i. 2.

² Ps. lxxxix. 27; cf. Heb. vii. 3.

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ciently express the truth, if "the race" were nothing more than a collective term for the aggregate of individuals. "Adam sinned" is the method adopted by St. Paul, in conformity with Hebrew modes of thought, to express the great spiritual experience, nowhere more vivid than in relation to evil-doing, that we are all bound together in the bundle of life, and that each man's guilt is only the expression of a similar condition attaching to society, which is but the individual writ large.

To speak therefore, as Mozley does, of "original guilt" as a mystery is not to cover what in its terms is unmeaning with a veneer of religious reverence, but on the contrary, to express in the only way possible a fact, which will only be fully understood when we are able to solve the fundamental problem of human, and indeed of all life, namely the one and the many, the type and the instance, the world and the individual. What we have most strongly to emphasise is that no new problem is introduced into thought by the recognition of common guilt, of universal sin. It is only when we attempt to resolve the great paradox by creating a new conception of sinful tendency to bridge

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the gulf, which we imagine to exist between an abstract Adam and our concrete experience, that new difficulties arise. This is analogous to the confusion of thought which is constantly brought about when we invest the State, for example, with the attributes of an individual, and cast about for something to harmonise the claims of the community with the rights of the man, whereas that State is surely ideal in which the life of each is the epitome of the life of the whole.¹ My sins are not other men's sins; but all men's sins are the World-Sin.

This is how the proclamation, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," is at once translated by each weary soul into a gracious, personal invitation to find in Him a resting-place for its own need. This is why the converted Saul has to arise and be baptized, and so wash away, or receive the pardon of, his sins. This, also, is the evangelical basis of social service in the Christian Church, wherein each individual is not merely a member of the Body but "the brother for whom Christ

¹ The State and the Community are not really the same thing, the former being an organ of government and the latter the society realised in its members.

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died.”¹ Behind the guilt of each sinner, yet not so as to be distinguishable from it, is the Guilt of the Race. Christ as the Second Adam recapitulates the whole of human kind. It is the very pith of the doctrine

¹ Rom. xiv. 15, 16. The close connection between the social message of Christianity and the work of Christ considered as an atonement is constantly overlooked. This may be illustrated from a tract entitled “Socialism and Christianity,” written by Mr. Percy Dearmer, secretary of the London branch of the Christian Social Union and published by the Fabian Society. Without committing myself to any socialistic programme, I may say that with the main outline of this very able paper, so far as it goes, I find myself in cordial agreement. But towards the close there is the following passage: “Much of all this has been forgotten, since Christians have devoted all their energies to breaking up the Church into competitive sects, and fighting with each other, and have made an apotheosis of selfish individualism by the Calvinistic heresies of justification by faith without works, the impossibility of falling from grace, and the still more hideous doctrine of predestination. I simply ask Christians of all kinds to be true to their common mother, the historic Church, and not be misled by those who have overlaid her teaching with their own selfishness.” The animus of these sentences against the Reformation is unmistakable. We all deplore the hindrance to all Christian effort which arises from “our unhappy divisions,” but it is grossly unjust, not to say unhistorical, not to distribute the responsibility. And it is simply untrue to describe the teaching of the Reformers, as this writer practically does, as “an apotheosis of selfish individualism.” In the first place “justification by faith without works” is not a “Calvinistic heresy,” but the common teaching of all the Reformers, identified much more conspicuously with Luther than with

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of the Incarnation, that in Him we find a covering Personality. He deals with the sins of each, because He has first dealt with the Sin of All. The one and the many, the community and the individual,

any other Reformer, shared at one time by Cardinal Pole, emphasised by Hooker, expressly declared in the Anglican Articles, and recognised by every Evangelical as fundamental. Then, as to predestination, Mr. Dearmer would doubtless call it hideous to declare that "just as predestination is a part of Providence in respect of those who are ordained to eternal life, so is reprobation a part of Providence in respect of those who fall from this end." But these are the words of Thomas Aquinas, and Calvin says no more. If Aquinas says that this is without prejudice to free will, so, if we will only consent to study Calvin in his own "Institutes," we shall find that he does also. I admit that, in spite of certain passages in Romans, the logic of which it is difficult to avoid, I prefer the silence of the Church of England with regard to reprobation. But it is not fair to saddle the Genevan Reformers with all the predestinarian extravagances, which, as those who recollect the conversation of the Lady of Lochleven with Dryfesdale in Scott's "Abbot" will know, are as shocking to them as to the most faithful sons of "our mother." Presbyterians are all Calvinistic, and their record, if not in social service, at any rate in the kindred work of missions, is second to none. The fact is that justification by faith and predestination are leading principles of the New Testament, and it is for us, not to disparage them, but to tone up our Social Gospel to the level of them. "Ye who were far off are *made nigh by the blood of Christ*," who has broken down "the middle wall of partition" between race and race, between class and class, between man and man. As we have sinned, so are we saved, "in one body."

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the race and the man—these diverse aspects of humanity, not so much as conditioning each other but, as it were, mutually indwelling one another, are the fundamental paradox of life. The "I yet not I" of St. Paul is merely the statement, in the case of the spiritual experience of the justified believer, of a principle that is universal.

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IF, as we have already seen, a more accurate scholarship and a truer conception of the thought of St. Paul have made it all but impossible for the modern interpreter to follow the misleading etymology of St. Augustine and the Middle Age, and to identify justification with the impartation of righteousness, there is still something too startling for the prevailing temper of the modern world in the paradox that God accounts righteous those who are in fact impious. Luther and the Reformers, not excluding the authors of the Thirty-nine Articles, who adopted a phraseology which was perhaps somewhat in excess of the actual language of St. Paul, and declared that by faith and faith only a man is accounted righteous, are accused of stating a doctrine disparaging to sanctification and dangerous to morals. It may be replied, not without justice, that similar objections,

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brought in the first century itself against the Pauline teaching, witness to the fact that the Reformation really understood the mind of the apostle more exactly than those who would tone down his apparent exaggerations. It would have been easy for him to explain that in the last resort there could be no righteousness which was not actual, if he had meant no more by his emphatic statements concerning imputation than to express a preliminary Divine dealing which is content for the time being to view men as they are tending to become and to anticipate the final verdict on their perfected characters.

But St. Paul never attempts any such explanation. His reply, whenever the obvious objections to his doctrine are placed before his readers, is always an indignant appeal to the primary moral instincts. "If our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God . . . Is God unrighteous? . . . God forbid . . . Why not (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil that good may come? whose condemnation is just."¹ "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid !" In the last case, it is true, the apostle goes on

¹ Rom. iii. 5-8.

² Ib., vi. 1, 2.

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to add a strong positive ground for Christian morality. But this is only reached by suddenly transferring the argument from the categories of justification and faith to those of baptism and the spiritual life. It would seem as though there were no direct answer to objections along the line of the original argument ; as though the teaching, if approached from the standpoint of the carnal and unbelieving, might in fact lie open to the startling conclusions which have been suggested. This is in itself strong confirmation of the view that justification in the mind of St. Paul is not only preliminary and tentative but ultimate and final, and that in relation to this verdict of God he is looking at the sinner, as we say, *sub specie æternitatis*, not in connection with his progressive development under the influences of the Spirit. This process is his glorification in the initial stages. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified."

But the fact that this abrupt appeal is made to the fundamental moral sense ought at least to warn us that the Christian experience, which St. Paul expresses in the doctrine of justification by faith, does not involve the abandonment of the principles of natural religion. It is inconceivable that

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a position to which the apostle was led by an exceptionally sensitive conscience should, as soon as it is reached, involve the searing of that conscience and indifference to ordinary morality. Not only is it the one condition upon which consecration, holiness, that love which is the fulfilling of the law, come within the range of practical attainment, but nothing is more apparent throughout the Epistle to the Romans than the quick response of St. Paul's mind to considerations of natural equity. Bishop Butler has said that Christianity is in the first instance a "republication of natural religion,"¹ and there is much in the Pauline theology that is entirely in harmony with this assertion. It is, for example, before the covenant that Abraham believed God and became the type of justification by faith. But we may call attention to what the apostle says about the heathen, when they do by nature the things of the law, as excused, that is acquitted or justified, by their own conscience. And when men would pervert Christian teaching as a covering for immorality, he refuses to hold parley with such disputants, much in the same spirit in which St. Peter told Simon Magus that he was

¹ Analogy, Pt. ii. c. 1.

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in the gall of bitterness. Before you approach Christian doctrine, he would say, you must have deeply learned the common lessons which conscience teaches, you must hunger and thirst after righteousness with all the passionate zeal for God which, if it knows not the way of salvation, burns to fulfil the Divine will. In this way the guarantees for morality are, we may say, already taken before the doctrine of justification is formulated.

That the New Testament, and not least St. Paul, regards the life of Christ as imparted to the members of His mystical Body is a truth upon which it is unnecessary to insist. It is involved in the very idea of the gift of the Spirit. What is of vital importance is to see that this is a result and not a condition of salvation. Confusion always arises when it is not sufficiently perceived that the subjective realisation of Christ in the character is not described as righteousness but as holiness. A different terminology may be quite legitimate. There is no reason why the word righteousness should not be used, nor would it be difficult to collect instances from various parts of the New Testament in which it may be quite fair to say that actual, realised, and manifested

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character is included in or even simply identified with the idea. But not to observe the distinction between righteousness and holiness, not to hold apart as different aspects rather than as successive stages in the Christian life the Pauline justification and the Pauline sanctification, is a fatal confusion. Thus a writer, who belongs to the extreme wing of modern Anglicanism, makes himself responsible for the following statement. Commenting on the declaration of the Epistle to the Hebrews that without holiness "no man shall see the Lord," Dr. A. G. Mortimer in "Catholic Faith and Practice" says, "This *imparted* righteousness must be carefully distinguished from the Lutheran doctrine of *imputed* righteousness, a legal fiction which represents God as covering human nature, defiled by all its sins, with the garment of Christ's righteousness—in which case the righteousness becomes no more a part of the nature of man than is the coat which he wears. By the imparting of Christ's righteousness man is *made* holy; by the imputation of it he is by an unworthy fiction only *accounted* as holy, while his sinfulness still remains."¹

¹ Chap. v. p. 80.

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Waiving the question whether in the Epistle to the Hebrews the word *ἁγιασμός* means moral holiness and not rather religious consecration, we are bound to protest against the fashion in which the changes are here rung on the terms righteousness and holiness. St. Paul never denies that by the imparting of Christ's holiness men are made holy, nor does he ever assert that by the imputation of that holiness they are accounted as holy. But it is difficult to resist the inference that, when he does say that sinners are accounted righteous, something is attributed to them which they do not in fact possess. And this conclusion is definitely drawn by the Apostle himself, first of all negatively in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, when he declares that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning their trespasses unto them;" and positively in the Epistle to the Philippians, when he expresses the fervent hope that he may be "found in him," having not his own righteousness but "the righteousness which is of God by faith." The meaning of the latter passage becomes obvious by comparison with the passage in Romans,¹

¹ x. 4-10.

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where the righteousness of faith is seen to be involved in the confession that Jesus is Lord. It is, therefore, a robe covering the sinner, not temporarily, but whenever God looks upon the justified man. "God wills to be approached by us," said the late Bishop Wilkinson, "as sinners hidden in Jesus Christ, with the rags and tatters of our natural clothing as entirely covered, as I am shrouded now in this surplice."

The failure to recognise that justification covers the whole life and character of the Christian, and that it is as much the free, unmerited act of a reconciling Father throughout the ages of eternity as in the first moment of a sinner's trembling faith, is apparent also in the writings of Dr. Du Bose. It is somewhat surprising that Dr. Sanday, whose keen appreciation of the terms of St. Paul's argument has hitherto prevented him from acquiescing in the tendency of modern theology in this matter, should have at last expressed himself as ready to evacuate the ground with "horse, foot, and artillery" in face of this subtle but unconvincing expositor. For, however strongly we insist that on this side of the grave the discrepancy between realised holiness and the divine ideal must always

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remain so wide that forgiveness will continue to occupy the horizon, yet, if in the view of the philosopher a righteousness that has become actual occupies the whole field, the triumphant power of the Pauline Gospel is seriously impaired, the ecstatic vision of the Apocalypse ceases to concentrate in self-forgetting wonder on the Lamb as it had been slain. No doubt there is something attractive in the term "righteousing" which Du Bose coins in order to unify the conceptions of accounting and making righteous. But the former still remains a temporary stage, an anticipatory and proleptic judgment. The following paragraph from "The Gospel According to St. Paul" will serve to make the position clear:—

"We see already in our Lord's parable of the treatment of the publican the precise and entire principle which in St. Paul we find developed into the doctrine of justification by faith. At its fullest and completest that doctrine means this: that the veriest sinner who begins to see and feel his sin in himself, by repentance, and his holiness or righteousness in Christ, by faith, is as truly on the way and as near to the end of righteousness as is then possible for him,

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and it is divinely right that his faith should be received and treated as being righteous, because it is not only the actual beginning of righteousness in him but is the righteousness proper for him at that stage. Righteousness in us cannot begin otherwise than as an incipient sense of sin and that *prolepsis* or pre-vision and apprehension of holiness which we call faith. Faith is therefore with a divine truth and propriety reckoned or imputed to us as being righteousness, for it is a necessary moment or stage in our righteousness."¹

What St. Paul calls righteousness is here identified with holiness. What God is represented as seeing in the sinner's penitent faith is the promise of the years. This may be true enough, and yet entirely misrepresent alike the apostle's meaning and the testimony of Christian experience. For it is emphatically not our righteousness, whether attainable or attained, upon which God looks when He pronounces the sentence of forgiveness. And to identify faith with incipient holiness is to convert faith into what the Reformers would have regarded as a work. The full Pauline expression of justifi-

¹ Chap. vi. p. 74.

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cation is "By grace have ye been saved through faith."¹ It is not strictly accurate to say that God requires faith. "The gift of God is eternal life."² If a gift is offered to me, I must take it. "Abraham believed God," took Him at His word, "and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness."³

We must, therefore, observe the main line of distinction between the terms righteousness and holiness. It is the latter which in the general Pauline usage represents what the writer just quoted means by actual righteousness. The former must be understood according to the thought of the Old Testament of the objective relation between man and God, the relation which must already have been established before the consecrated life of holiness becomes possible. When the apostle's career was arrested in mid course by the vision of the exalted Nazarene on the Damascus road, he interpreted this critical experience in the light of his Jewish, Pharisaic antecedents. It was acceptance with God that all unsuccessfully he had been endeavouring to win by his observance of law, his scrupulous performance of duty. God was the great, present fact

¹ Eph. ii. 8.

² Rom. vi. 23.

³ Ib., iv. 3.

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which had dominated his consciousness. His attitude of mind was religious rather than ethical. Not that a man of his Hellenic culture could be indifferent to "whatsoever things are lovely."¹ But he had the Hebrew longing to stand right with God, who had given Israel a law. To some extent even he may have shared that want of proportion between the weightier matters and the tithing of herbs which, surprising as it is to the modern moralist, was not unnaturally characteristic of his sect. To be approved whensoever God should arise to judgment was the anxious desire of his heart.

When at length he beheld Jesus of Nazareth his point of view immediately shifted to that which had inspired the fathers and holy men of the Old Testament. It was no longer the narrower teaching of the priestly code, necessary as that was to produce on the one hand the knowledge of sin and on the other the yearning for propitiation, but the wider vision of the history and expectation of their race inspiring the prophets, which now illuminated the pages of the sacred writings. Christ interpreted and was Himself interpreted by the prophets. The peace and

¹ Phil. iv. 8.

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progress of a true life could only become possible in the power of a right relationship to the Eternal, which the Divine Lover of Righteousness had Himself established. That was the meaning of the history of the Chosen People. Israel was Jehovah's son, whom He had called out of Egypt; His bride, whom He had espoused to Himself by the great act of redemption from the house of bondage. It was not for their righteousness or for the uprightness of their heart that He had brought them into the land of their inheritance, but because He had a favour unto them. The old covenant rested upon a basis of unmerited deliverance. God gave Israel a law because they were by His own free choice and election His people. And the repeated acts of rebellion whereby they grieved His holy spirit witnessed to the need of a covenant established upon better promises. So Jeremiah, in the hour of bitterest defeat, was led to a reassertion of the principles upon which Israel had first become a nation as the basis of a great expectation of a second deliverance, in which God should Himself be again the sole agent. The name of the restored city should be "The Lord is our

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righteousness.”¹ The new covenant was to be established in the forgiveness of sins. They whose righteousnesses were as filthy rags were to stand and see the salvation of God. Ezekiel takes up the message, and paints the picture of the restored city and of the people brought up out of their graves and quickened into new life by the breath of the Almighty. Righteousness is thus synonymous with grace, salvation, the state of acceptance with God. The idea becomes very prominent in the second Isaiah. The very notion which appears so shocking to modern interpreters of St. Paul, that they will not allow that it is implicit in his teaching, is actually anticipated. “He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.”² To interpret righteousness in this passage subjectively, to make it equivalent to a realised holiness, would do violence to the figure, and spoil the parallel which reveals the term as equivalent to salvation. The ground of the prophet’s gladness is something purely external to himself. “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God.”³ Nothing could show more

¹ xxxiii. 16.

² Isa. lxi. 10.

³ Ib.

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plainly that the recipient of the Divine mercy has here nothing to do with the righteousness wherewith he is clothed. He accepts the "wedding garment" ready made, not merely the material with which to make it. The attitude of a true member of the elect community is one of trust. He dwells under the defence of the Most High, he abides under the shadow of the Almighty. He is kept in perfect peace because his mind is stayed not upon his good deeds but upon his God, whose hand is not shortened that it cannot save. If, then, the final question for St. Paul was, as for every Israelite, "Wherewith is man to win the favour of God?" the answer came, when once he had recognised in Jesus the realisation of those principles of salvation adumbrated in the Old Testament. Christ and Christ alone is my righteousness. I am overshadowed, enveloped, covered by His reconciling work.

When, therefore, he has to meet the inevitable objection of the moral man, it is of the last importance to observe the manner in which he deals with it. The "God forbid" of an outraged conscience cannot be the complete reply to the demand for ethical results. His experience as a justified sinner

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is too real, vivid, and abiding to admit of any compromise. But by a swift transition of thought he passes from the Godward aspect of redemption to the issues which concern the daily life and work of those for whom in Christ there is no condemnation. He is no longer, as it were, approaching baptism as the act of incorporation into Christ, whereby he washes away those sins which hinder his reconciliation with God and receives the remission of trespasses. That great event with all its expressive symbolism now lies upon the horizon of his Christian experience. Viewed from outside this union with Christ is justification, viewed from within it is sanctification. It is worth while to notice that, whereas St. Paul speaks of the Christians as having formerly yielded their members as servants "of iniquity unto iniquity," he bids them now yield themselves as servants "of righteousness unto holiness," though it would have been quite in accordance with Biblical usage to have repeated righteousness in the second half of the antithesis. It is as though he instinctively felt that, having used righteousness above in a different sense, it were better now to avoid confusion by adopting a different term for

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“actual” righteousness. This view of Christian life as sanctification is concurrent with the view of it as justification. It is the other side of the shield, the same fact interpreted under a different category. It emerges naturally when the soul, resting on the finished work of Christ, begins to contemplate the future, yearning for a progressive consecration in the will of the Father and desiring earnestly to be transformed into the image of the Son. The question whether a man is justified at the beginning or at the end of the Christian life is not really relevant. Justification is reconciliation with God, and reconciliation with God involves the gift of the Spirit. God cannot justify without sanctifying, because to receive the adoption of sons is to be baptized into that Spirit whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” Failure to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit is coincident with lapse of faith, and demands a renewed act of forgiveness and reconciliation. It is therefore perfectly accurate to say, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” nor could Abraham have believed God without obeying Him. There is nothing anti-Pauline in the statement of the Epistle to the Hebrews,

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“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out.”¹ And it is scarcely necessary to repeat, what has often been pointed out, that careful thinking will reveal the fact that the assent, which is what St. James means by faith, is a wholly different mental and moral attitude from the joyful acceptance of the reconciling work of Christ, which is St. Paul’s use of the word.

If it is argued that this interpretation of the Pauline gospel, as compared with that which commends itself to Moberly and Du Bose, not to speak of the older school of which Liddon may be taken as a representative, is to make a distinction without a difference, and that we ought rather to endeavour to subsume both Protestant and “Catholic” theology in this matter under a higher unity, there are several lines on which an answer must be made.

In the first place, it cannot be wrong to adhere closely to the exact form in which the ideas are presented in Scripture. It is in this respect that the more recent writers of a type not strictly Evangelical are to be preferred to the Catholic theologians of a

¹ Heb. xi. 8.

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somewhat earlier period. If St. Paul did borrow his language from the law-court, then it is important to recognise that to justify means to account righteous, even though the divine act which it expresses be confined without sufficient warrant to a preliminary stage in the sinner's relations with God. And there is at least a presumption that a change in the form will be accompanied by a change in the substance.

Secondly, it is very difficult to account historically for the cleavage of thought which marked the sixteenth century, if we are to hold that the controversy concerning justification was largely based on a failure to realise that the struggle was after all a matter of words and names. Very different types of character have resulted from the sides then taken by contending parties and maintained with a zeal that was prepared to suffer martyrdom for what was reckoned vital truth. It is not for nothing that men are willing to stake their all upon a doctrine which they describe as "the article of a standing or falling Church."

Next we appeal to Christian experience. As a preceding chapter endeavoured to show, it is the weight of transgression that oppresses

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the soul which seeks refuge from its sin in the God who redeems. The accumulated guilt which, apart from the satisfaction wrought by Christ, is inseparable from the man himself, no matter what change of conduct the future may show, is the real obstacle to holiness, and demands the eternal Sacrifice. We may doubt whether the desire to turn over a new leaf is really prominent in the consciousness of the man who turns for refuge to the Crucified. He is already arraigned before the divine judgment-seat, and—

“Who knows but the world may end to-night?”

It is only in the assured peace of being “joyfully ready” to meet the ultimate issues of life that the man’s whole personality is liberated to serve the Lord in that beauty of holiness which is not marred by the painful efforts of a scrupulous self-consciousness. This is the note which gives to a genuinely Evangelical piety its unique and wonderful power, as the character grows and expands in the sunlight of the Presence. No doubt there are truths, the realisation of which is necessary to check unchastened exuberance.

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No doubt we need the balanced encouragement of a Keble—

“Mount, but be sober on the wing;
Mount up, for Heaven is won by prayer;
Be sober, for thou art not there.”¹

But while we go forward, “not as though we had already attained,” there will be a real danger lest it should not be “from strength to strength,” if the assurance of pardon and peace through the Blood of the Cross go not before us as a pillar of cloud by day and all the night through as a light of fire. The mediæval thinker, jealous and rightly jealous for the Sacraments, but regarding these almost exclusively in their relation to God’s purpose of sanctification, and not also, as they should primarily be considered, in relation to the act whereby He justifies the ungodly, resisted the Biblical doctrine, which Luther rediscovered, and declared that grace was the spiritual strength which was imparted to the faithful rather than the free favour whereby righteousness was reckoned to the believer. A similar bias still tends to throw the weight of ecclesiastical opinion against a doctrine which is supposed, but wrongly, to be a rival to the sacramental system for the redemption

¹ Christian Year, Fourth Sunday after Easter.

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of mankind; though our fathers, who in the eleventh Article of the Church of England declared that "we are justified by faith only," and in the Catechism that the Sacraments are "generally necessary to salvation," were of a different mind.

An interesting estimate of Dr. Pusey from the Life of Dr. R. W. Dale will serve to indicate what to minds that are essentially Evangelical would seem to be the fundamental defect in its influence on character of a view of Christianity which does less than justice to the sole merits of Christ as not only the cause but the ground of our salvation.

"I have just finished the first two volumes of Pusey's Life," writes Dr. Dale, about a year before his death, "and the change to Stanley is very striking. I am doubtful whether Stanley will 'find' me as Pusey did. What a man that was! I seemed to know all about him before I began; and, indeed, the new facts illustrating the rise of the Tractarian Movement and Pusey's part in it are very few indeed; but I closed the book with a deep impression of the nobleness and massiveness of his nature, and feeling more than ever that the power of God was in him. The absence of joy in his religious life was only

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the inevitable effect of his conception of God's method of saving man ; in parting with the Lutheran truth concerning justification he parted with the springs of gladness."¹

The fruit of the Spirit is joy. Surely it is with everlasting joy upon their heads that the redeemed are to come to Zion.

¹ Chap. xxv.

VI

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It is characteristic of Christian theology that it rests not upon deduction from principles but upon interpretation of experience. It thus lies very near to life, to practical ethics, and to vital religion. In this it differs absolutely from Greek philosophy, which is an intellectual attitude with only a remote bearing upon motive and action. For the Christian, thought and action alike spring out of a spiritual experience. That experience is the real presence of Christ.

St. Paul connects his missionary activity as the apostle of the Gentiles with obedience to the heavenly vision of the risen Jesus. And it is obvious that the revelation of God's Son in him, which is how in the Epistle to the Galatians he expresses the event of the Damascus road, is the source alike of his preaching and of his theology. But Harnack

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reminds us in "What is Christianity?" that St. Paul was not the first to claim such an experience.¹ It was the belief that even then Christ was a living Person which formed the essential fact in the religion of the apostolic Church. Nor was it a mere belief. It was continually proving itself in life. Stephen in the hour of his martyrdom looked up and saw Jesus. Not alone at his conversion, but in the night watches at Corinth or in the castle at Jerusalem the Lord stood by St. Paul. Ananias had been sent, as he believed, by Jesus Himself to open the eyes of the blinded and praying persecutor in the street called Straight. Moreover, He was manifested as exalted to God's right hand. This mode of being, far from setting the ascended Nazarene at a distance from the life of His community, did but bring Him nearer. For it meant His union with that Godhead which is about our path and about our bed. It involved, therefore, the possibility of direct contact with the risen Manhood, not indeed as a ubiquitous presence, which would have been inconsistent with the fundamental character of bodily existence, but as a presence in power and effect, transcending all intervals

¹ Lecture ix.

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of time and space. This experience was highly realistic in form, and was in the simplest sense of the word a self-evident fact. "Have I not seen the Lord?" was a question which might confidently have been put by others besides St. Paul. It was the power of this realised fact that enabled the witness of the primitive Church to become a martyrdom.

The promise attached by the risen Lord Himself to the Great Commission was that of the abiding Presence. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel" and "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." This was but the reiteration of a promise which in the text of St. Matthew's Gospel stands in very close connection with the grant of authority to bind and loose, an essential element in the constitution of the Christian society.¹ "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I." It was the possibility of such a presence that was borne in upon the minds of the disciples by the appearances of the Lord after His Resurrection. St. John must have begun to realise that his Master had passed through death into a new and higher stage of being, when in the empty tomb he beheld the cerements, not loosened,

¹ xviii. 18-20.

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as would have been the case if Jesus had indeed returned to this lower life, but simply untenanted, as though the Body that had inhabited them had passed upward into a new mode of existence.¹ He stands in the midst of His apostles, though no door has given Him entrance. He has overheard the doubts of Thomas, though none observed Him to be near. No unbelieving eye has ever yet looked on Him whom they pierced. For Pilate and the chief priests, Calvary was the last of Him. No theory of the Risen Body of Christ is ever put forward in the Gospels. They are too naïve, too straightforwardly historical, to do more than record the actual impressions of those who saw Him. He is no ghost. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones." But it is just the way in which the phenomena are recorded that enables us to perceive their true bearing. The disciples are sure that on the third day the grave was empty, and that they have seen their Master in bodily form. But apart from the fact that on the morning of the third day the tomb was un-

¹ The view of the incident narrated in John xx. 1-10, which is here followed, has been recently presented by the Dean of Westminster among others. A different account of it was given by Dr. Westcott in his St. John's Gospel.

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doubtedly empty, that no body was subsequently found, and that therefore the positive experience of disciples could never be disproved, there is nothing in any one of the evangelists to suggest that in the ordinary narrow sense of the word Jesus had come back into the world, or to compel in unbelievers any explanation of what had occurred that should improve upon the theory that "his disciples came by night and stole him away."

The impression created among the disciples was that their Master was no longer confined to the ordinary limits of mortality. He was indeed on the other side of death, which had now become an incident in an encompassing life. The experience of Olivet, associated as it was in their minds with a promise that renewed the assurances of the upper room—an ascending Son and a descending Spirit—instead of removing Him as from their sight so also from their neighbourhood, suggested at once that He was henceforth to be approached in the same manner as that Eternal Being "who is not far from any one of us." Exaltation rather than removal was the meaning of the Ascension. The circumstances of the choice of Matthias reveal the primitive

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community acting upon the assumption that the Lord is personally though invisibly present to select His own apostle, and may be addressed in the form of prayer: "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen."¹ And the phenomena of Pentecost, fulfilling as they did not only the prophetic anticipations of the Messianic kingdom but the very letter of the Master's promise, came as the final and convincing testimony to the fact that Jesus had been marked off as the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. The new covenant, therefore, had actually been established in the forgiveness of sins, because the new heart spoken of by Jeremiah and Ezekiel had become an actual fact.² The gift of the Holy Ghost was a reality. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." Messiah was now exalted a prince and a Saviour in the midst of the ransomed people of God. Baptism into His community was the pledge of forgiven sin.

This was, if we may so put it, the train of thought by which the apostles were brought to a recognition of the Death of Christ as

¹ Acts i. 24.

² Jer. xxxiii. 8 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.

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an offering for sin. The doctrine of the Atonement ultimately rests upon the experience of the real Presence of Jesus Christ in the midst of the worshipping Church. For the grave and gate of death was the passage through which He was enabled to approach that joyful Resurrection in the power of which He now lived and reigned, a prince and a Saviour. His suffering, therefore, was the means whereby as "the servant of Jehovah" He was perfected in bringing many sons to glory and establishing the kingdom, the reconciling act which made possible the universal gift of forgiveness and the outpouring on all flesh of the Spirit of the Son.

And not only is the real Presence the source of the doctrine of Atonement, but it is fruitful also in developing the teaching concerning our sanctification in Christ and the vivid realisation of the Church's sacramental life, especially in relation to the celebration of the Eucharist. What we require to see is that one dominant experience looks many ways, works out in various directions, and holds together, so to speak, aspects of the believer's life in Christ which are apt to become separated in thought. There is in reality a

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marked simplicity in the basis of the whole Christian consciousness, which ought to show that schools of religious thought often considered as rivals are implicit the one in the other. It is the relation of this primitive idea of the Presence of Jesus to eucharistic doctrine that is now to engage our attention.

In view of the tenacious hold which the belief in the real Presence as connected with the Holy Sacrament has gained over the mind and affections of Christendom, it is at first remarkable that very little prominence seems to be given to the idea in the New Testament. We are often told that the last relic of religious feeling to disappear from the minds of those, who from Latin Christianity lapse into agnosticism, is the sentiment of mystic devotion which surrounds the Mass. This is very well brought out in Browning's "The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's." And there are many minds in the English Church, which find the truths of Evangelicalism very difficult to assimilate, but which experience no similar difficulty in accepting the sacramental Presence. Yet when we turn to the apostolic writings we are at once struck rather by the way in which the Presence is, we must not say

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dissociated from the Sacrament, but powerfully realised in quite other connections. We have nothing corresponding to the miracles connected with the consecrated elements with which mediæval legend abounds. We do not even find accounts like that which is given of the appearance of the Face of Christ above the worshipping congregation at the hallowing of St. John Lateran. Christ appears to Stephen at the hour of death, to Saul on a journey, to Ananias in the visions of the night. The seer of Patmos is in the Spirit on the Lord's day. But there is no instance in which any such manifestation is recorded in connection with the Eucharist.

The fact, however, remains that contact with Christ in the Church was the characteristic experience of the first believers, witnessed by the New Testament, attested by primitive hymns, evident in the accounts of early martyrdoms. Nor can it be supposed, especially in view of the promise in St. Matthew,¹ that this characteristic experience should not from the first have connected itself with what is the characteristic gathering of disciples in the name of Jesus for the celebration of the Eucharist. It was in

¹ xviii. 20.

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these meetings that Christians assembled before the dawn to sing hymns, as the report reached the younger Pliny in Bithynia, to Christ "as to a god." The extraordinary reticence which was observed concerning the Christian mysteries doubtless in part accounts, not only for the distorted reports of what was supposed to have occurred on these occasions that reach us from pagan sources, but also for the slender references to the Sacred Meal which occur in the writings of the apostles. But the continuous history of the Eucharist from apostolic times to the present day, no less than the principles of the Christian society, compel the conviction that there was never a time when He, who was solemnly invoked by the community in the selection of Matthias, with whose power St. Paul speaks of the Corinthian Church as gathered together for judgment on the offender, could have been thought of as absent from the Holy Table which He had Himself furnished. Rather, as He had made Himself known to the disciples at Emmaus in the breaking of the bread, would He be felt to be present as the Unseen Guest at every meal in the house of a Christian.

The account of the institution, which

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St. Paul gives in the tenth chapter of First Corinthians seems to speak of the Eucharist as a rite that fills an interval of absence between the Lord's Death and His coming again. It is he who emphasises the memorial character of the celebration. "Do this in remembrance of me" is a sentence which does not occur in either of the first two gospels, and, according to what is probably the right reading, not in the third; and it is further emphasised by the comment, "Ye do show the Lord's death till he come." But the impression thus given of commemorating an absent Saviour has already been corrected by anticipation in the preceding chapter. For the very conception of the Lord's Table postulates a present Master, who has Himself "prepared a sacrifice" and "sanctified his guests." The comparison and contrast drawn between the Christian altar and the table of demons rests upon the principle that underlies all sacrifice, that is to say, fellowship through the oblation with the object of worship.

We require to understand the circle of ideas among which St. Paul's mind is moving, before we can fully appreciate what he means when he speaks of the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist as a fellowship of the Body

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and Blood of Christ. It is the idea associated with all social meals, which involve, according to their deeper significance, that aspect which is uppermost in Oriental hospitality, a common clanship among those who share each other's food.

“And thou shalt eat the White Queen's meat,
And all her foes are thine.”¹

The guest friend becomes a brother in blood, enters into the life of the family, becomes bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. Our common humanity is expressed in the phrase “men that live by bread.” We are one loaf. Now it is certainly the desire to become “one body with” God that underlies all rites of sacrifice, rites of thankful oblation no less than rites of propitiation. According to Robertson Smith communion is the final end of sacrifice.² No doubt there is type, fiction, representation in the rites both of hospitality and of sacrifice. They do not convey what they signify. But then that is precisely what Christianity in all its parts claims to do.

¹ Kipling's *Ballad of East and West*.

² See *Religion of the Semites*, also Art. “Sacrifice” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

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“Types and shadows have their ending” because “that which is perfect is come.” This is what is drawn out in detail with respect to the Mosaic ritual in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And St. Paul’s contrast between letter and spirit is certainly not intended to create the impression that the latter is the shadow of the former, but quite the contrary. Is it therefore possible to doubt how St. Paul would view our Lord’s eucharistic action at the Last Supper? He sees Him in the midst of His disciples clothed in that body of flesh which He was even then giving for the life of the world. He sees Him personally present at this supreme moment of sacrifice, already in will hanging upon the Cross as the satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Here is the kingdom of God established in the Death of Messiah, and He blesses His people by calling them to eat bread in it. Here is the suffering which purchases the forgiveness of sins, and He summons His followers to drink of His cup. This Bread and this Wine, which His hand hallows, are His own food, in which He now calls His chosen to participate. In one act it unites all that is represented alike in the rites of hospitality

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and the ritual of offering. We share the life of our Brother Man; we enter into union with God through His Death, the sacrifice of His Body. So the Apostle interprets the Lord's words, "This is my body," "This is my blood"; this Bread and this Wine are the instruments whereby we have fellowship with Him in His sacrificial Death. Surely Bishop Andrewes is right when he speaks of those who enter into sacramental union with God through Christ as coming *usque ad cadaver*, to the slain Body.¹ For those who thus make a covenant with God by sacrifice do indeed approach Christ as the offered victim whose outpoured blood cements the union between man and God. Such language is not meant to imply that the living Lord is not Himself present at God's Board in the midst of His worshipping disciples. But what He gave them on the night of His betrayal, that and nothing else, is what He gives us now. Just as Calvary is an eternally present fact in which we see Christ uplifted to draw all men to

¹ For a fuller treatment of this and other points in relation to the Anglican doctrine of the Eucharist I may, perhaps, be permitted to refer to my little book entitled *The Thing Signified* (Leeds : R. Jackson).

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Himself, so, to borrow the language of Wesley's eucharistic hymn, "The offering smokes through earth and skies." It is by Christ's Death we live. That is the point at which our union with Him arises. We, as it were, die with Him in order that we may live with Him.

The Apocalypse represents death as a fact taken up into the encircling life of the Eternal Son. "I am he that liveth, and I became dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." It is the reversal of that apparent order which seems to manifest itself in "our little life" which "is rounded with a sleep." We are taken up into the selfsame encompassing Life if we are brought into union with that historical manifestation of the Christ which is summed up in His Death. So in the Sacrament of Initiation "we are baptised into his death," "buried with him by baptism into death," united with him "in the likeness of his death." And it is equally true that in the other Sacrament we bring ourselves into fellowship with the Sacrifice. Christ is there in the power of His Resurrection to admit us to the fellowship of His sufferings, His faithful obedience unto death, His loving surrender of life.

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No doubt this involves vital contact with the inner principle of the Saviour's life. But what we have to get clear is the idea actually involved in the Sacrament itself, and that is, as it would seem, the appropriation of the Death. I do not think we have any warrant for saying that in the Eucharist we eat and drink the Real Presence. The conception is sufficiently difficult in any case, but it is involved in the definitions of Trent, and in many theories of the Presence which avoid the realist terminology used to express the doctrine of Transubstantiation. It would be a form of statement more in accordance with Scriptural and primitive ideas, if we said that the Sacrament was in the Presence rather than the Presence in the Sacrament. The promise of that Presence is made to two or three gathered in Christ's name. He still takes bread, still Himself consecrates the cup. Here, of course, we must distinguish. If, as for example by Jeremy Taylor, the phrase "Real Presence" be taken merely to cover the gift of His Body and Blood which Christ imparts to us in the Eucharist, we are making the only assertion which is consistent with the facts of the New Testament and the testimony of Christian experience.

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And that Presence is external to us because it comes to us from without. But it is really a teaching very different from this that has been built up step by step, as the language of devotion has become the material for dogma. The personal Presence of the "whole Christ" becomes a deduction from the sacramental gift, not the reality of the sacramental gift an assured result of the Presence. It is not difficult to construct a series of inferences from our Lord's statement that the eucharistic bread is His body, which shall make the smallest particle, as the Council of Trent expressly declares, the form under which Christ is present. How this ratiocination has operated to the justification of the Papacy in refusing the cup to the lay people, and to the establishment of such popular and modern devotions as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, is, of course, well known.

What lies entirely outside not only the facts of the New Testament but the possibilities of Christian experience is neither the realisation of the Presence of our Lord at the Eucharist nor the assurance that our lives are indeed built up into His by participation in the Sacred Meal. On the contrary, these are precisely the points at which testi-

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mony and experience are not only legitimate but necessary. It is the process of rationalistic inference and verbal deduction introduced in the place of living spiritual apprehension which has become the fruitful mother of superstition. It is the dulness of our blinded sight which seeks to assure itself that Christ, whom it does not see, is yet really present because something else is present which it can see. The process of ratiocination starts from the consecrated Bread. This Bread, it argues, is the means whereby I receive the Flesh of Christ; therefore wherever this Bread is, there is the Flesh of Christ. It is this conclusion, and not the mediæval conception of a change of substance, which is essentially the doctrine of Transubstantiation. The argument then proceeds as follows: But the Flesh of Christ is inseparable from His Personality, and, inasmuch as the smallest particle of the consecrated Host is sufficient for the purpose of the Sacrament, therefore, wheresoever a crumb of the Eucharistic Bread exists, there is Christ in all the wholeness of His Personality. Every step of this reasoning is highly precarious, and assumes a knowledge of the conditions under which a mystery becomes possible,

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which is no part of that mystery itself, and is in fact inconsistent with the very idea of a mystery. If, for example, our Lord creates a separation between the Body and the Blood in the very terms in which He delivers the Eucharist, what warrant have we for determining the precise relations of the Sacrament or of any part of it to the whole Christ? It is a misapplication of logic, wise above that which is written, to make the attempt. And it bears no intelligible relation to spiritual experience. That Christ is with us at His Table may be, has been, and is the subject of such experience. That under the form of this simple meal He does as a matter of fact work invisibly in us is capable of similar proof, as men learn to know that the consecration of their lives, and the intensity of their faith, are intimately connected with their communions. But it is when faith fails that ratiocination enters. As the eighteenth century made the existence of God the conclusion of an argument, so did the Middle Age identify the Presence of Christ with a theory of the Sacrament.

The result of this treatment has been, on the one hand, the establishment of a eucharistic worship and the construction of a sacra-

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mental theology maintaining themselves to a great extent in isolation from the general scheme of Christianity as it appears in the New Testament; and, on the other, an Evangelicalism robbed of its wholeness by separation from the sacramental system of the historical community. Among Protestants conventions for the deepening of spiritual life have taken the place of the Breaking of the Bread, which was the normal service of fellowship and consecration among primitive Christians. In Catholic circles devotions of the Blessed Sacrament, and even pious meditations of a more general character, of which the Imitation is the flower, often exhibit a singular divorce from the language and forms of thought drawn directly from the Scriptures. The Eucharistic Presence has become, as it were, a thing apart. There has been a too great readiness to insist that it is altogether different in kind from that which is promised to two or three gathered together in the Name, or which was realised by St. Paul on the road to Damascus and in the silence of the night watches. Is it too paradoxical to say that we need, on the one hand, a more universal use of the language of Keswick and Conishead; on the other, a

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more general adoption of the practice of those churches that are distinguished by the Daily Celebration? This will only be achieved by realising that the Presence of Christ in the worshipping congregation comes first, and that the reality of the gift imparted in the Eucharist is dependent upon it; that the Lord is with us before the consecrating hands have been laid upon the consecrated Bread and Wine, which become the instruments of our abiding in Him because He touches them. We need to keep far more prominently before our minds the thought of personal fellowship with Christ in the sacrificial feast. To the disciples in the upper room belonged the blessedness of eating bread with the Messiah in the kingdom of God. "Ye shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." That was His own promise at the Last Supper itself. And St. Paul's phrase, "the Lord's table," sacrificial as it undoubtedly is, arises nevertheless out of the idea that God is at rather than on His own Board.

The point of this distinction is to emphasise the fact that our incorporation with Christ depends upon our participation in what is in the first instance His own food. We are not told that our Lord partook Himself of

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the Bread and Wine which He distributed to His disciples, but surely the whole conception of the action implies that He did. "My table" is the table at which I eat bread; the meat and drink that lie upon it and which I distribute to my guests is my own food. The Eucharist is the Bread of God because it is rather that which sustains His own Life than the nourishment that He provides for His people. He shares it with them because it is His. This goes deep into the heart of Christ's teaching. If He is the Bread of Life, He has Himself meat to eat which the world knows not of. His meat is to do the will of Him that sent Him. The Father has given Him a cup to drink. Those, who would fain sit on His right and left hand in the Messianic kingdom, must be able to be baptized with His baptism and to drink of His cup. As by His own baptism in the Jordan He sanctified water for those whom He calls to share in the purification from sin, so in the Father's kingdom He is Himself to drink the new wine, which for His disciples means participation in His glory through fellowship in His sufferings.

It is the same thought under another

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figure which comes before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews. We have access to the Father through the veil by the new and living way that He has hallowed for us by Himself treading it with painful but prevailing steps. That road is His own human experience; His temptation, suffering, and Death; all that may be summed up in the term "his flesh." This is His sacrifice, the offering of His Body, presented through the consecration of His Will. And this oblation is sacramental, entering in through the veil rent but not removed. Its outward form is the historic Cross, its inward reality is the presentation before the Father of the victorious Death. Surely we are here moving amid a circle of ideas to which discussions concerning transubstantiation, commixture, concomitance, the presence beneath outward forms of a natural body, the speculations of Zwingli and Calvin no less than the definitions of Trent, are irrelevant. Outwardly the Eucharist is the union of Christ's disciples in a common meal, in which, as on the night of His betrayal, they with Peter and James and John share the Bread which as the Host or Housefather He breaks, the cup which

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He blesses as the President of the Feast. But in the heavenly places behind the veil it is that communion through His Death with His risen and glorified Life, in which, as the final end of sacrifice, they are one with Him, the author and finisher of their faith, in the Will of the Eternal Father. Any narrower view, which allows the mind to rest upon the elements and what by consecration they may be said to become, is bald, jejune, inconsistent with the genius of the New Testament, and leads inevitably to a cultus of the Sacrament which is an excrescence upon apostolic Christianity, draws the mind away from the historic Gospel, and mars the wholeness and simplicity of the apostolic faith. And it is an unprimitive sense of Christ's absence that has led men to imagine that they could detain Him as the Prisoner of the Tabernacle.

Perhaps no early writer has fastened more securely upon the sacramental character of the Incarnation than Ignatius, when he insists upon the necessity of holding fast the concrete facts of the Virgin Birth, the Cross, Death, and Resurrection of the Saviour, as the pledges of its reality. Certainly no writer has emphasised more clearly

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the necessity of adhering closely to the one Eucharist, the outward and visible rite, as the guarantee of union with God. But it is Ignatius who is responsible for certain remarkable interpretations of the Flesh and Blood of Christ, which would scarcely commend themselves to the mediæval theologian. "Recover yourselves," he says to the Trallians, "in faith which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love which is the blood of Jesus Christ."¹ To the Ephesians he had previously said that faith and love in their unity are God, and that they are, the one the beginning and the other the end of life, so that to be perfect in Jesus Christ is to have these two things fully developed in the character.² Faith and love would, therefore, seem to represent that which we receive from Christ in our mystical union with Him. Not, of course, that there is anything merely metaphorical and symbolic in the Eucharist, but rather that the Flesh and Blood, the true humanity of Jesus, which we receive from contact with Him is, or at any rate is in experience represented by, those qualities which are the stamp of Christ, the evidence of the Divine

¹ Trall. 8.

² Eph. 14.

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Nature in ourselves. There can be little question that language of this character, while it is entirely congruous with such Pauline expressions as "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," is scarcely consistent with the language of a later devotion which seeks to adore Him "present in this holy Sacrament." The sacramental elements are through the Holy Spirit the instruments in the hand of a present Christ to preserve our "body and soul unto eternal life." As through the spoken word thought passes from mind to mind, so through the sacramental meal we grow incorporate into the Life and Sacrifice of Him with whom we are one Spirit.

VII

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THERE is no side upon which the practical value of Christ appeals more strongly to this generation than that of His example. Masses of men to whom organised Christianity in all its forms is a matter of indifference pay an unstinted homage to the ideal manifested in the person of Jesus. They recognise the capacity for leadership even where they fail to acknowledge the power to redeem. They are often supremely anxious to know how He would act in the circumstances of their own life, what would happen if Christ came to Chicago, how the man or woman of the twentieth century may follow "in His steps." These aspirations characterise alike the middle class, who are made uneasy by the abundant pleasures which modern wealth commands, and the social democracy, who hunger for a more abundant and wealthier life. "What would Jesus do?" asks the one.

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The other cries, "Obey His vision of brotherhood."

That this enthusiasm for the personal Christ and His ideals tends to be united, if not with a denial of, at least with an indifference to, those claims to be more than man upon which the religion of Jesus rests, need fill us with no undue alarm. After all, it sends us back to the story of the Gospels, to read it once again without those prejudices and prepossessions which dogma involves, and which hinder the unsophisticated rendering of the facts that springs out of a rigid inductiveness in temper essential to a sound divinity. "Bonus textuarius, bonus theologus." If in the past it is the honest and true heart which has approached Christ with a strong ethical enthusiasm and sympathy and found Him to be the redeeming Son of God, we may be confident that the same spirit and the same method of access will re-discover the Saviour of the World. What this age needs is not apologetics but Christianity. The former has its place, no doubt, but a subordinate place, namely to brush away the cobwebs from the intelligent spirit already predisposed towards the Gospel, and perhaps also to create doubts in the public

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mind whether, after all, we Christians are quite such fools as we look. But the real work is done by those who are progressively able to enter more deeply into the inexhaustible riches of the mind and character of Him who is "The Master."

There is therefore a profound significance in the uneasiness with which the Christian Church, in spite of papal protests against "modernity," is contemplating the possibilities of readjustment between the Christian ideal and the facts of social life in the present day. Jesuit preachers may, if they will, make strange bedfellows of Socialism and the sins of society in the interests of "the most old-fashioned church" in Christendom. The Tory *entourage* of Anglican bishops may, if they please, refuse to regard treatises on Christ and the Social Question as of equal importance, say, with essays on Christian mysticism for the study of ordination candidates. But who that desires to see Christ enthroned in the society of the future, which is even now shaping itself amid the decay of what once seemed a stable fabric, can regard otherwise than with misgiving any chasm that separates the official witnesses of Jesus from movements that at least are not essentially

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anti-Christian, and that command enthusiasm akin to that which inspires the preacher of the Gospel? Mr. F. G. Peabody, in his book on "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," says: "The creed of social revolution has become, in many minds, a distinct substitute for a spiritual religion. It has drawn to itself the same emotional loyalty and zeal which are commonly associated with a religious faith. Men go to the scaffold for the cause of revolution as they once died for Christ, and with a spirit akin to that of Christian martyrs give their lives for the creed of the social democracy."¹ While the better class of English social democrats—for example, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, whose book on "Socialism and Society" may be cordially commended as a temperate and scientific account of the best ideals of the party—would doubtless prefer to speak not of social revolution but of social evolution, the statement of this American writer on Christian ethics may be proved in personal experience by any who will be at the pains to test it. Not long ago I attended in Leeds a gathering organised by a local Socialist club. There was, of course, much that was rhetorical, much also

¹ P. 298.

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that showed an unstatesmanlike limitation of outlook, in the deliverances to which I listened. But what struck me about the tone of the meeting was what I may venture to call its strongly religious character, and that idealism which is conspicuously absent from the historic parties that still retain the confidence of the majority of the British electorate. Such a party cannot but have before it a future greater than its past. It manifests all the vigour of youth. It is hopeful, ardent, optimistic. Say what we may about Jacobinism and inflammatory speech—and I am certainly not concerned to defend an intemperance of language which may easily become a menace to human life—its object is not demolition but reconstruction. And there is something truly pathetic in the appeal to Christ which is often made by its advocates. As I am writing this chapter there appears in the *Yorkshire Observer* a letter which exhibits a point of view that we are bound not to neglect. Here is the greater part of it:—

“The movement was originated in Palestine by Jesus of Nazareth, a noble social reformer and a sublime moralist. Going behind the name that has stuck to the

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movement for 2000 years, what was the movement itself? After over thirty years' study of the Founder and the movement, by the aid of such records of it as are available to me, no term so fully and so exactly describes it as 'Socialism.' What else was the 'kingdom of God' He so earnestly laboured to bring in, explained so carefully by His parables, illustrated so clearly, and for which at the hands of a proud, formalistic, unsocial, class-bound, dogmatic, orthodox Church He finally died? For 300 years the Socialism of Jesus prevailed, casting the devil of selfishness out of the hearts of men and women, and setting them earnestly to work for the social good, living for others rather than for self.¹ Then the spirit of ecclesiasticism seized the movement, and ecclesiastics called their councils, shaped their creeds, changed the centre from a kingdom of heaven on earth to a kingdom of 'dreamy do-nothing for ever and ever' in some other world. . . . The common sense of mankind turns away from it all. Christianity as Jesus lived it

¹ It will be observed that the writer of this letter is not inclined, as Mr. Dearmer appears to be in a tract previously noticed, to ascribe most of our social narrowness to post-Reformation influences.

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and taught it finds its truest expression to-day in the men and the movement that are trying with all their might to make this world the best and noblest world possible for all men."

The historical inaccuracies of this account of Christianity it would, of course, be quite easy to criticise. I do not quote the letter in order to approve it—though with much that it suggests I should probably sympathise more fully than the majority of Churchmen—but in order to emphasise that wistful longing for the leadership of Jesus Christ which is apparent in the present age.

But the letter will also illustrate the two great difficulties which beset the path of him who in any definite sense seeks to make Christ his example. I look round me and see men of very different political ideals, of divergent social aspirations; and I am constrained to acknowledge that each and all of them are better Christians than I am myself. And not only are they morally better, but some at least are equally rational. The Tory parson in the next parish, who shakes his head at what he is pleased to call my political prostitution of the pulpit, appeals, and not without justice, to the declaration

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of our Lord, "Who made me a divider and a judge over you?" My genial though wholly temperate colleague, who thinks me an extravagant Manichee with a Nonconformist conscience because for Christ's sake I seek to propagate total abstinence, declares triumphantly that the Son of Man came not only eating but drinking. I escape for a few hours from the dust and swelter of the town into the refreshing shades of a rectory garden, where a mother in Israel in the shape of a parson's wife, who in all probability is living Christ among her neighbours, and to whom my heart naturally warms far more than to many a "British woman" who accompanies me to the rostrum of Salem or Bethesda, cries her Ichabod over the departing village schools, with the social loyalties for which they stand. On Saturday my blood has boiled in the quarry at Mirfield as I listened to some cassocked Boanerges denouncing the selfish and ungodly rich. On Sunday I have almost repented of the sermon preached at Evensong under these stirring influences, as I sat at supper in the halls of some devout capitalist, such as are the very marrow and sinews of most English dioceses. This is a very real perplexity to any mind that is

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able to take a broad view of the facts whether of the Gospel or of contemporary Church life. You begin to wonder whether there is not some dishonesty in the tone of confidence with which you claim the authority of Christ for your own sympathies or, it may be, mistake your withering watchwords for the voice of Him who neither strove nor cried. Those who oppose your point of view produce their evidence of self-seeking, of meanness, of mendacity, in the party with whom you have been acting, and you are dumb, as unable to deny the charge. What, then, is the follower, the minister of Christ to do? Is he to sink down into that complacent indifference to anything but the average opinion, which, basking in the sunlight of a comfortable Church establishment, is ready, when one government is prosecuting a war, to proclaim a popular imperialism and, vocally at any rate, "to fight the good fight with all his might," and, when another administration has starred a marriage bill, to publish his assent to the will of Parliament as the conscience of British Christianity; to declaim against Christian Socialists in country houses as a Tractarian relic of Popery, or to greet a triumphant

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democracy with a "Come unto me, all ye that labour?" Where, then, is the Cross? With regard to such an attitude how is it possible to be other than a doubting Thomas? Except I shall see in my hands the print of the nails, I will not believe that my life has indeed been baptized into the example of our Saviour Christ.

Here is one of the difficulties. Now turn to the other. It may, perhaps, not unfitly be stated in the words of an American travelling in Palestine, quoted by Mr. C. H. Robinson in his very interesting book, 'Studies in the Character of Christ.'¹ His visit to the Holy Land had cost this man his Christian belief, and this is how he expressed himself: "If Christ were really to come into the world, He would come on the top of civilisation: He would come in Chicago!" Whether Chicago adequately represents the top of civilisation to-day may legitimately be doubted. Whether the present age will appear a hundred years hence to be anything like the acme of human development may with some degree of security be answered in the negative. But the American's meaning is tolerably plain,

¹ P. 16.

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and it suggests a very real problem. Jesus Christ may have been entirely adequate to the environment in which He found Himself. But His environment was not ours. You may drive a motor with ease along a country road, when your one chance of safety would be to bring your car to a stand at the side of the street in Piccadilly or on Ludgate Hill. I remember a man going up to London from the quiet Scottish parish of Traquair, and after half-an-hour spent in the streets of the capital returning to his native hillside with the remark that there were "owre mony people yonder." And even though we Christians would say at once that the Son of God must have been equal to any situation in which conceivably He might have been placed, yet it remains true that He came at a particular point in history, removed by nearly two thousand years from our own day; that the garments in which He clothed Himself were those of a Galilean peasant; that the life He lived was that of a Palestinian Hebrew of the first century, not that of an Englishman of the twentieth. The force of the difficulty thus created is immeasurably enhanced by our modern con-

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ception of the world not as a mechanism of recurrent wheels but as a living organism of constantly evolving parts. How can we say with any sort of certainty what Jesus would have done this morning in London? Can we have an absolute Christian standard? Must there not be relativity in all moral action?

In the first place we must avoid that view of Christ and His teaching which regards the New Testament either as a system of casuistry or as a code of morals. The Bible is not the Christian's manual or Red Book, which he is to consult in times of doubt or difficulty in order that he may find his course of action cut and dried. This is the vice not only of Tolstoian Socialism but of the popular view of the Sermon on the Mount. All who refused a rigid communism would stand at once condemned on this interpretation of the Gospel. "Let him that hath two coats impart to him that hath none." It would be extraordinary, if it were not common, that men should be very slow to perceive that the will of God for us in Christ cannot be reached in this rough and ready manner.

Good examples of this narrow view were afforded by the parliamentary debates on

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the bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister in 1907. And it is virtually thus that some are now bidding our clergy to abandon anything like a conscience in the matter, because the Hebrew law does not forbid the marriage in question, but even under certain conditions requires union with a husband's brother. This is legalism in its worst form. Our Lord Himself rebuked it on the one occasion when He is seen to have departed from His ordinary method of refraining from positive enactment, in order, as it would appear, to show that the law even of the sacred nation was at variance in the matter of divorce with eternal principles. The very fact that some uncertainty attaches in this instance to the limits of the positive command only throws into bolder relief the great principle, which it was His intention to assert, and which He seems to wish us to apply with some emphasis to every question which touches marriage.

Nothing enables us to realise more clearly the unique personality of our Lord than the homage which age after age has instinctively paid to the authority of one who yet never attempts to break through the historical circumstances of His career. If Christ had

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been a lawgiver, the spell would long ago have been broken.

It is at this point that we shall be greatly helped by such books as C. H. Robinson's "Studies in the Character of Christ," or F. G. Peabody's "Jesus Christ and the Christian Character," to which reference has already been made. The former of these, though, as appears to me, seriously defective in its view of our Lord's atoning work, is full of suggestion from the ethical side, in its treatment of the paradoxes of Christ's character and teaching. The latter, frankly approaching our Lord from the moral side without dogmatic assumptions, discovers the value of His example in the paradox of sacrifice—"He that loseth his life shall find it;" the paradox of service—"Whosoever will be great among you let him be your servant;" and the paradox of idealism—"The life is more than meat." This means not that the primary instincts of self-preservation and acquisition are at fault, but that in view of that purpose which is wider than the things which are seen, sacrifice is self-preservation, service is the proper sphere of competition. It is the reversal of those prudential morals which

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are the inspiration of the industrious apprentice. There are statues in many of our cities of worthy aldermen and local benefactors with all their merits depicted in stone reliefs or recorded in ponderous phrase upon the pedestal. Would to God we could replace them by Calvaries.

Such an ethical ideal as this is, of course, dependent on the conviction that He, who was among men as a server and who gave His life a ransom, was under no delusion about the eternity of things not seen. It therefore, as Peabody himself perceives, involves a religion. If Christ be not risen, there is nothing but the ardent optimism of youth in the splendid Quixotism of His self-devotion. *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.* Still, as ardent optimism it would not be without its effect, and all action that is not selfish is really based upon the faith that there is a Best, however little reason may be able to attest such a belief. And men inspired with this view of the goal of life, which they have gained from a study of the personality of Jesus Christ, and of those who like the apostle Paul have been imitators of Him, must exercise a modifying influence upon the social organism of incalculable power. The love of God and

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of the whole brotherhood of God's family, pursued as a passion which dominates the entire character, is, after all, the Alpha and Omega of Christian morality. So far it is well.

But, when all is said, though it be true that men need again and again to be reminded of what is only a commonplace when the acknowledgment of it has become conventional, and that recovery of a genuine love for God and man gained at the feet of the Master will insure a genuine imitation of Christ in social life, we are still very far from a final answer to those perplexities, which are often keenest where the will to do God's will is strongest. For it is always the minor premiss in the syllogism of conduct which is the hardest to find. All may be agreed that justice should be done. It is quite another thing to arrive at any degree of certainty that this, namely, some particular reform, is just. We may all admit that we ought to love our neighbour as ourselves. But the man in the Gospel asked the entirely appropriate question when he inquired of our Lord, "And who is my neighbour?"—a question which Christ was only able to answer by way of parable. Or even if I am

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able to recognise in any given case the claim of neighbourhood, I may be entirely at a loss to know how, supposing I love another, I ought to act towards him. There are, or have been, so we are told, races of men whose piety towards grandparents demanded the physical absorption of their aged relatives on the part of their descendants. I imagine that the arguments which at one time convinced even bishops of the soundness of West Indian slavery were not entirely unreasonable and are not altogether antiquated. There are probably many stalwart Christians who will declaim with magnificent eloquence St. Paul's words about the equality in Christ of all mankind, but yet are convinced that kicking is the only method with a Chinaman, that a benevolent autocracy is the best form of government, and that the true sphere of woman is "the home." Thirty years ago we all believed that Free Trade had so far become the permanent atmosphere of this country that a Protectionist was only to be looked upon as a survival almost as interesting as a Jacobite or a Nonjuror. And though for several generations we have taken it for granted that to fight a duel is anti-Christian and that the institution

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of slavery contradicts the New Testament, I do not see what there is in the nature of things which may prevent the growth of a new moral climate in which to deny these propositions may seem less unreasonable than it does to-day. The point I wish to make is that any moral standard we like to name involves the minor premiss, this is a particular case which comes under the general law or principle. Ethical sentiment seems to enter zones in which it comes almost as a primary perception that a particular course of action and none other is compatible with fidelity to an acknowledged principle. To those who with Wilberforce are emancipating the slaves, it seems as though no other course were open to a Christian nation. But what about the proposition that no Christian can hold shares in a brewery? What about Mr. Spurgeon's "I am a Liberal because I am a Christian"? Or the cry, not unheard at the last Parliamentary election, "Churchmen who vote radical prefer party to church"? Yet all these positions seem perfectly self-evident to the persons who hold them. It is just the coincidence of the minor with the major, in the mind that perceives it, which makes the arguments used in its support appear intoler-

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able rhetoric to those whose climate is different. But it is only through these struggles of parties, whose points of view it seems impossible to reconcile, that moral advance is won. When, for example, we compare such a period as that of Deborah and Samson with that in which we ourselves live, though we may with some confidence assert, even in the face of the highest criticism, that the Ten Commandments are common to both, we renew our confidence in our own forlorn hopes of ethical idealism by the very contrast with Christian society which the Book of Judges presents. Width of experience and the wisdom of tolerance bid us check an ill-balanced enthusiasm. *E pur si muove.*

Here we touch the point where the imitation of Christ must move forward into something further, a baptism into His Spirit. We begin with that assimilation of character which springs out of the contemplation of His recorded history. In proportion as we are enabled to see Him as He is, we shall be like Him. That is a law of communion and fellowship which belongs even to the lower planes of human intercourse. The influence of one personality upon another is often so

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intimate that a community of spirit grows up between master and pupil, between friend and friend, between lover and beloved. Instinctively they view life with the same eyes. Separated by a continent the one from the other, confronted by circumstances such as have never previously arisen in the experience of either, it needs no laborious recollection of former converse, far less any interval in which to reopen communications, for either to act as the other would have done in a like situation. Each carries his friend within himself. Each will realise by a kind of divination how the other would have met, and consequently how he would have him meet, the opportunity which now lies before him. Were the man asked to produce his reasons, he might be as powerless to give adequate grounds for his action as the dyer of whom J. S. Mill speaks, who could not communicate the secret of his wonderful colours to the firm by which he was employed. That is an analogy of the surest way in which the example of Christ will be reproduced in the actions of those who, even if they stop short of a full confession of His divine Name, yet find their highest ideal in Him. Some look for precedents, and some for principles, while

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others desire but to gaze upon the Person, and for them the vision is power.

And thus we reach what is the final and only satisfactory answer to the question, "How is Christ our example?" Christianity is the covenanted ministry of the Spirit of Jesus to the lives of men.

One of the most noticeable features in the epistles of the New Testament, and more especially in the writings of St. Paul, is the way in which the historical Christ seems already almost to have passed into the background. Now and again, as in some of the later chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, we seem to catch echoes of the Sermon on the Mount in ethical teaching which almost seems to suggest a collection of Logia, or the sayings of our Lord, to which the Apostle would appear to have been no stranger. But the daily details of Christian practice, the importance of which is evident in the young society of the Church, growing up as it was in the midst of the decaying civilisation of the Empire, are almost invariably based by St. Paul on the great theological teaching which arose out of the vision of the risen Saviour. St. Paul deliberately

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determines not to know Christ after the flesh. To him Jesus Christ is and ever will be the crucified, risen, and ascended Redeemer, who is the power of God unto salvation to all believers. To him the approach to Christian ethics is always through the Cross. The foundation is laid in forgiveness. Then follows the sanctification or consecration of the believer in the Spirit. Then the fruits of the Spirit. His own experience was a vivid realisation of what it is to be ἐν Χριστῷ, to know the power of His Resurrection, "Christ in me" by, an actual baptism into the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead, who indwells and transfigures those who may now say, without metaphor or hyperbole, "We have the mind of Christ." They who are thus admitted to the fellowship of the Spirit henceforth know no man after the flesh. In so far as they are yielded to His influence the proportions of life are changed, and they look out on the world with the eyes of God Himself. This is the secret of that confident handling of the moral problems that beset the early Church, which exhibits some at least of that authority with which Jesus taught, but with

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little conscious appeal to that teaching. To us who in the full sense of the word are Christians, it is infinitely more important to perfect our dependence on the Holy Spirit, who is Christ in us, than even to read afresh the synoptic story of Christ's earthly life. Nay, that very re-reading of the Gospels will be itself illuminated in subtle and unexpected ways by Him whose function it is to take of the things of Christ and to show them to us. And each marvellous adjustment between the personality of our blessed Lord and the circumstances under which He was called upon to act, will so heighten our reliance upon the inexhaustible capacities of that same Spirit, who still indwells the Body, as to cause us to go bravely forward in these dangerous days. How many ecclesiastical Christians are, like the Highland minister's cat, walking "circumspectly" among the broken glass, even though on occasion they may be prepared to sing of "stepping fearless through the night"! I do not mean to say that reliance on the Holy Spirit should bring with it that overweening confidence, which mistakes our thoughts for God's thoughts, our will for His Will. There

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will not be immunity from error for those who do not cease to be human even though they walk by faith and not by sight. Nor do I wish to imply that, because we are led to act, and to act strongly, in one direction, our ears are deaf to all that may be urged in favour of a different course. But, if probability is the guide of life, then we require courage to identify ourselves with paths, the issue of which is not demonstrably plain. Like Browning's Pope, set to pronounce a judgment of life and death, we need to "grapple danger whereby souls grow strong."

"I it is who have been appointed here
To represent Thee, in my turn, on earth,
Just as, if new philosophy know aught,
This one earth, out of all the multitude
Of peopled worlds, as stars are now supposed,—
Was chosen, and no sun-star of the swarm,
For stage and scene of thy transcendent act
Beside which even the creation fades
Into a puny exercise of power.
Choice of the world, choice of the thing I am,
Both emanate alike from Thy dread play
Of operation outside this our sphere
Where things are classed and counted small or
great,—
Incomprehensibly the choice is Thine!
I therefore bow my head and take Thy place."¹

¹ The Ring and the Book, x.

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The Calvinists were not wholly wrong when they spoke of God's secret purpose. The example of Christ is not as plain and easy as the alphabet, for if on the one hand it be true that in Him the Father is revealed, it is also true that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom, those deep things which the Spirit still searches in the experience of to-day.

THE END

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